

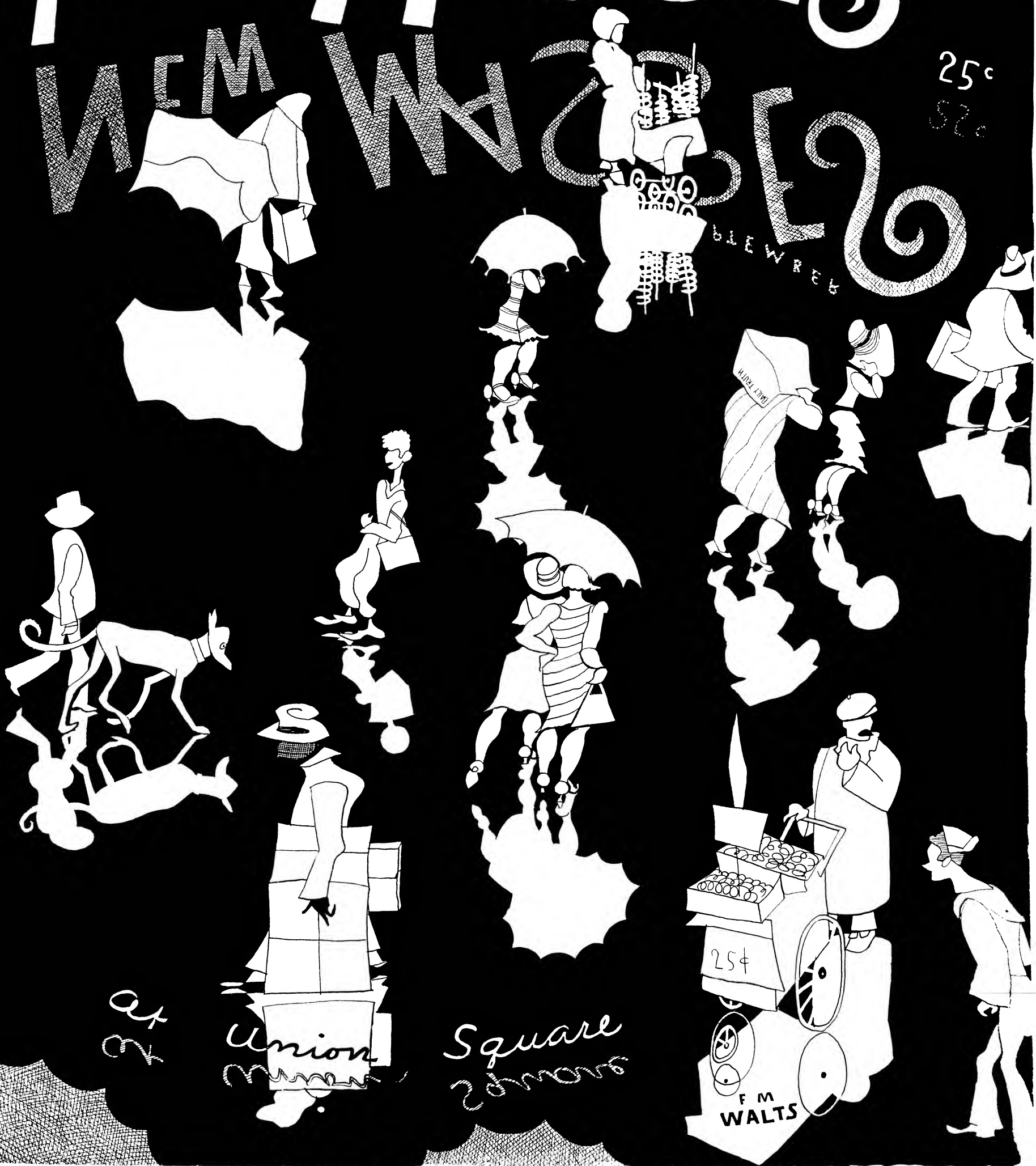
# NEW MASSES

SEPTEMBER 1927

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# HEAVENLY DISCOURSE

By Charles Erskine Scott Wood

*Hilariously Illustrated*

By ART YOUNG and HUGO GELLERT

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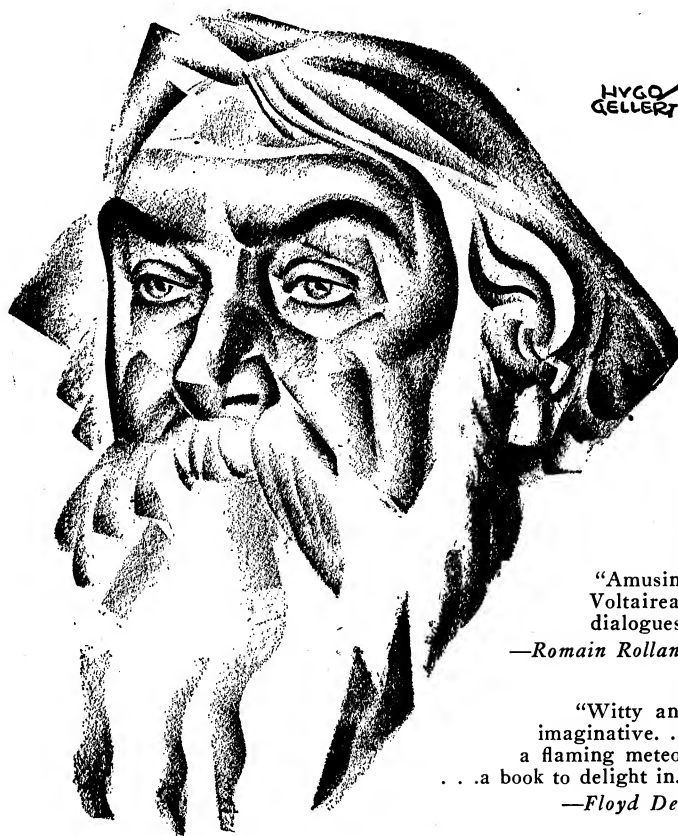
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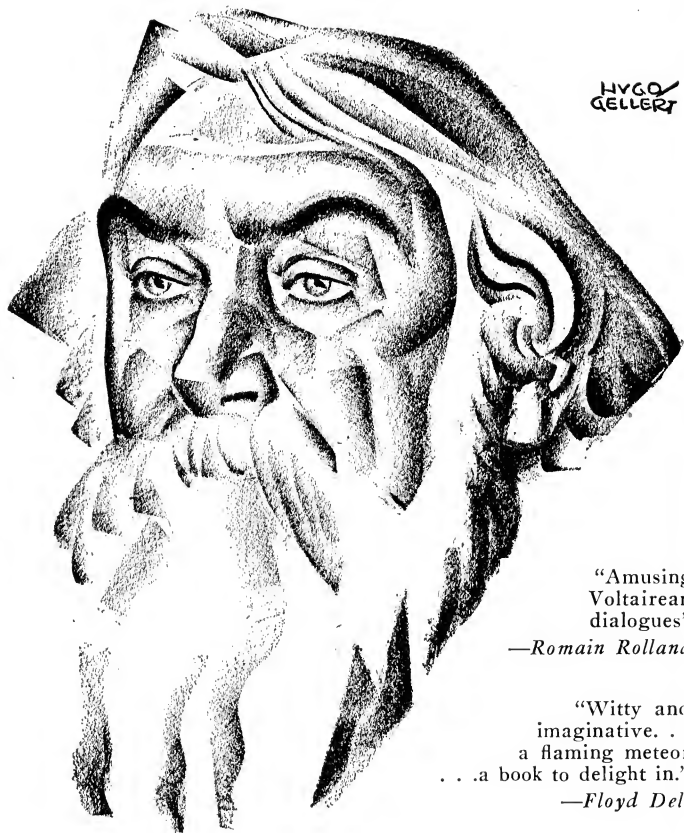
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## Class War Still On

There are probably millions of people in this country who believe that justice has been at stake in the Sacco and Vanzetti case. Many of these people have sent ardent letters and telegrams to Governor Fuller and even to Cal Coolidge telling them so. But there doesn't seem to be a bit of evidence that Governor Fuller, and the dignified and cultured gentlemen who helped him to his decisions, were swayed in the slightest degree by a passion for justice. They didn't ask each other, when they got together behind the closed doors: Are these men guilty? It is much more probable that the question resolved itself in their minds something like this: "What can we, as gentlemen, do about this unpleasant affair?"

That attitude seems to include some elements of fairness. It gives the New York *World*, for instance, a fine chance to be self righteous. The *World* is very angry at the radicals who are fighting this thing out along class lines.

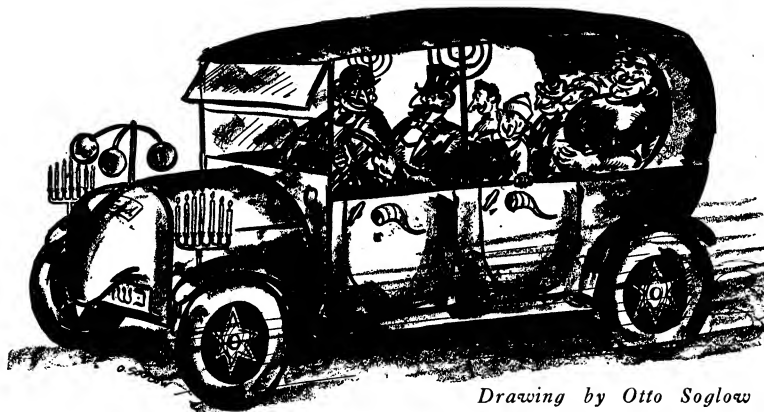
"There is no question about it that the activities of the Communists and Anarchists are the greatest of all obstacles now in the way of a calm reconsideration of the Sacco-Vanzetti case. . . . Annoying as the behavior of the Communists and Anarchists is, they can no more threaten the security of the state than they can fly to the moon. The American system is so firmly established that nothing can really undermine it except the unwisdom of its own rulers."

Exactly. Governor Fuller, and President Lowell of Harvard, and Judge Grant, and Ralph Pulitzer, of the *World*, — these and their class are the state. Fish-peddlers and cobblers and their like may come to them to beg for mercy, but it is preposterous and unthinkable that they should demand it. And it is to the shame of American labor that its protest was so feeble as to be scarcely heard in the Massachusetts capital. The supine attitude of the laboring masses in America regarding this case will strengthen the arrogance and contempt of the industrialists for their hirelings. While the workers, on one hand, are being herded into shop unions, big business is organizing a formidable army, directly under its own control, which will do its demands more unhesitatingly than the sometimes undependable troops of the political state.

"The American system is so firmly established that nothing can undermine it but the unwisdom of its own rulers."

An arrogant statement, but it will continue to be true until American labor is organized into active and militant bodies, who can demand justice, not beg it.

Egmont Arens.



Drawing by Otto Soglow

## THE NEW MODEL Mr. Ford Apologizes to the Jews

# NEW MASSES

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## CONTENTS

Cover Design—by Frank Walts.....	Page
Mr. Ford Apologizes, A Drawing—by Otto Soglow.....	3
The Same Old Massachusetts, A Drawing—by Art Young.....	4
"Good" And "Bad"—by Heywood Brown.....	5
Gentlemen of Massachusetts, A Poem—by James Rorty.....	5
Lynchers in Frock Coats—by Michael Gold.....	6
White Man, A Story—by Grace Lumpkin.....	7
Farm Picnic, A Drawing—by Wanda Gag.....	8
Literary Gelding—by Kenneth Fearing.....	9
Visitors' Day, From a Woodcut—by Hanns Skolle.....	9
The Right To Bear Arms, A Drawing—by Diego Rivera.....	10
Zapata's Ghost Walks—by John Dos Passos.....	11
Corridos Singer, From a Woodcut—by Lowell Hauser.....	11
Picnic on the Cliffs, A Drawing—by Boardman Robinson.....	12
Back to Earth, 'Gene—by Charles Ashleigh.....	13
North Sea Fishermen, From a Painting—by George Grosz.....	13
Cowboys, A Drawing—by Jan Matulka.....	14
Incentives—by Joseph Freeman.....	14
Five Dollars A Head—by Oscar Ameringer.....	15
After the Flood, A Drawing—by William Siegel.....	15
Ye Cock-Eyed Worlde, Excavations—by William Gropper.....	16
America Comes to Dikanka—by Albert Rhys Williams.....	17
Turcoman, A Sketch—by Boardman Robinson.....	17
Mexican Armed Workers, A Drawing—by Xavier Guerrero.....	18
Twilight of Chiang Kai-Shek—by P. T. Lau.....	19
Ten Million Peasants—by Earl Browder.....	19
Pie, An Epic—by Otto Soglow.....	20
That "Baby Revolution", A Letter from Vienna.....	21
Them Reds, A Drawing—by William Gropper.....	21
Fascist Finance, A Drawing—by Art Young.....	22
That Monster, The Machine—by Lewis Mumford and Genevieve Taggard.....	23
Divine Pastures, A Drawing—by Adolph Dehn.....	24
I Meet an Individualist—by Hugo Gellert.....	25
Coney Island, A Drawing—by Effim H. Sherman.....	25
Satirist or Metaphysician?—by James Rorty.....	26
One More Law to Violate—by Floyd Dell.....	27
Eskimo Madonna, From a Woodcut—by Lowell Hauser.....	27
Book Reviews—by Lola Ridge, M. T., Gertrude Diamant, Kenneth Fearing, Alain Locke, Eli Siegel and Allen Tate.....	27, 28, 29, 30, 31

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MARSTIN 438 PRESS

## "Old Grey-Headed Cop"

In this issue we are printing an eye-witness's description of the Vienna riots, written by a boy of sixteen in a letter to his mother. It ought to make interesting reading for Governor Fuller and the Boston Brahmins, who have been having such a hard time deciding how much they could get away with without precipitating a riot. It ought to be interesting reading too, for any "old grey-headed cop" who happens to be on the Boston police force. The anger of the masses mounts slowly, but once it breaks the barriers it does not discriminate easily between its enemies. It is not soap box orators who provoke mobs to violence, it is black robed gentlemen who are too contemptuous.

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### DEAR NEW MASSES:

In my copy of the July number was a notice to say that my subscription had expired. I sent a double subscription because NEW MASSES is clearly worth double its price.

To-day came the August number—and again a subscription reminder. (Doubtless my cheque crossed this issue in the post). I return the little green slip with another five dollars—because NEW MASSES is really worth not double but four times its price.

But go easy! Don't put that slip in again!

London. Francis X. Meynell.

## Young and Impish

### DEAR NEW MASSES:

I like the magazine very much. I can never be sated of Gropper's terrible macabre humor. Wanda Gag is splendid too. Always fresh and young and impish. It was I that first saw her work at her funny little studio flat and got her to contribute to the *Liberator*.

Paris. Claude McKay.

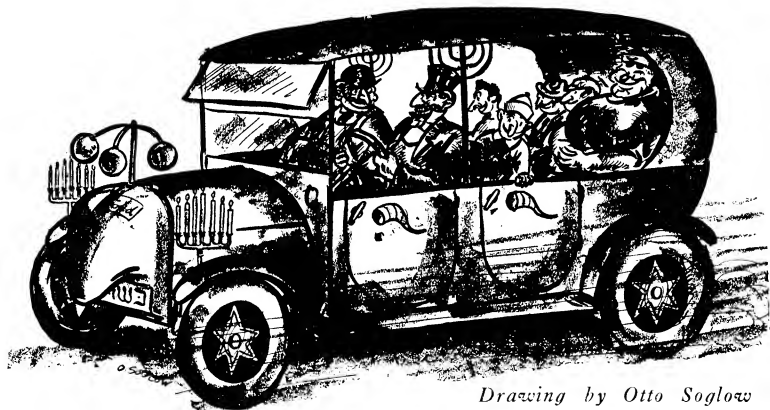
## Go She Must!

### DEAR NEW MASSES:

I should be only too glad to have you use my stuff without rewarding me financially. The joy of becoming articulate is sufficient recompense to anyone who has something, or even nothing, to say.

Burnham P. Beckwith.





*Drawing by Otto Soglow*

**THE NEW MODEL**  
**Mr. Ford Apologizes to the Jews**

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# **NEW MASSES**

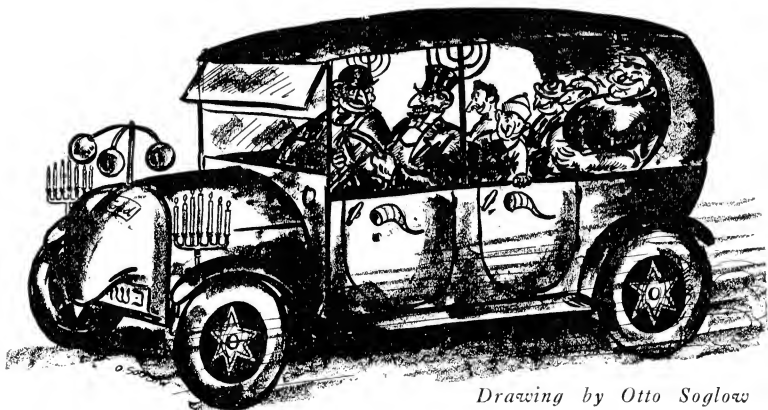
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**VOLUME 3**

**SEPTEMBER, 1927**

**NUMBER 5**

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*Drawing by Otto Soglow*

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**NUMBER 5**



THE SAME OLD MASSACHUSETTS

Art Young  
Drawing by Art Young



Drawing by Art Young

THE SAME OLD MASSACHUSETTS



# "GOOD" AND "BAD"

By HEYWOOD BROWN

WHENEVER a community gets into a commotion about the question of justice men divide sharply into two camps. The majority generally cries for a hanging and it is the minority which fights for mercy and for fairness. Certain shrewd philosophers would have us believe that the division almost invariably is conditioned by economic status. Readers of *The New Masses* are not unfamiliar with Capital who is fat, cruel and bloody, and Labor who wears a bruised but lovely mien.

But this conception works imperfectly. Some of the harshest Tories I have known worked with their hands for barren pay. Among those who love the constitution, the courts and every device of our present civilization there are many who have suffered vilely under the very institutions which they revere. We all know of the existence of people who love to have hobnails thrust into their faces. And so I think it may be possible to find some words more precise than economic ones with which to label the contending forces of the world. For ages the world employed the terms "good" and "bad" and these adjectives have not yet lost all potency. Whenever there is a true and gallant fight for justice one can find all the good men upon one side and the bad ones on the other. In order to avoid confusion we will use the words "good" and "bad" in their traditional sense. Accordingly, when the issue is drawn you may expect to find all the good people in any community crying out for the hanging. It is the bad who desire justice and mercy. In this country, at any rate, much of our goodness derives from the dogmatic interpretation of the Gospels. It is not reasonable to expect much mercy or justice from an individual who believes that God is jealous and the proprietor of an eternal hell. How can anybody shudder at the thought of capital punishment if his mind accepts the dogma of an everlasting pit of torture for sinners. The courts of Massachusetts are not half as harsh as those set up around the last judgment seat as conceived in the minds of the orthodox.

The world should have known when Governor Fuller appointed good men upon his advisory committee that he had no intention of reversing Thayer who is also a good man. The Governor and his respectable friends went through the motions of searching for bias and prejudice in the trial of Sacco and Vanzetti. Perhaps they did

more. They may have made every honest effort of which they were capable but one should not send gentlemen in smoked glasses to look for white flowers. No man can be good in the traditional sense unless he has repressed practically all his sub-conscious promptings. He must live entirely out of the upper layers of his mind and neglect the deep and secret springs. The modern psychologists are bad men. They have loosed the lions, but no important investigation could have been made of the case of Sacco and Vanzetti without some probing into the sub-conscious motivation of the men upon the various tribunals.

Consider for instance the committee's finding in respect to Judge Thayer. Lowell and Stratton and Grant were compelled to admit that he had been indiscreet. So great was his passion against the prisoners that he bubbled over into denunciation in talks with casual acquaintances in wash rooms, trains and club lounges. This the committee admitted and even so it expressed the opinion that Thayer had granted Sacco and Vanzetti a fair trial. Here we have supposedly well educated men supporting a theory which is psychologically impossible. The mere record of his words was not

enough. By intonation, expression, gesture and a thousand subtle devices Thayer must have influenced the jury which sat before him. It is possible that often he conveyed his animus without being aware of what he was doing. And it may be that the jury men told the truth, as far as they could see it, when they testified that everything that went on in the court room was fair and honest. But the whole process of investigation was rendered futile by the fact that prejudice was piled on top of prejudice. Governor Fuller picked out of Massachusetts three men wholly similar to Judge Thayer in beliefs and temperament and then asked them to ascertain whether this man was biased. Then to reduce it all to the lowest absurdity, even after the committee's report had practically touched bottom, Webster Thayer was designated to decide whether or not Webster Thayer had acted with prejudice.

I flunked out of Harvard and I assume that A. Lawrence Lowell did not and yet I would be ashamed to harbor such naive notions about psychology at those which this venerable university president accepts. Seemingly he does not know that prejudice is an internal organ. A man who bears a prejudice must be wholly unaware of its existence within his body. He knows that something is fermenting but always he accepts this as a noble impulse. Did ever a Klansman commit himself to utterance without insisting that he was making a battle for righteousness, free speech and liberty? And the Klansmen who have said these things honestly believed their own utterances. The charge that they were actuated by prejudice seemed to them mere fantasy. As soon as anyone says, "In this particular matter I am very prejudiced," he is practically healed of his bias if only his remark is sincere. Sacco and Vanzetti were found guilty by men who wanted to find them guilty. All the reviews were conducted by people who had every interest in sustaining the original decision.

I do not believe that the whole array of the prosecution from Thayer to Lowell was a complete lineup of rascals. On the contrary I think it was the misfortune of Sacco and Vanzetti to fall into the hands of good men. Men of such a sort have always constituted the world's harshest tribunals. Good men never give themselves a chance and how can it be expected that they will be any more fair to others?

## GENTLEMEN OF MASSACHUSETTS

Understand this, you bleak-hearts, you gray imposters, you wisps, you spectres, half-born, death-elected;

*No man votes death to another; self-given, that cup, and you—*

Seven years we pled and pled with you; we said:

"This blood you crave is poison, this for you and yours the final, steep

"Gulf to oblivion, why so fast, old apes? The tiger Tomorrow has smelled you, the sky

"Breeds vultures, though you sow a hundred Christs on every hill

"Death is your harvest, it will not be long.

"Because the fish peddler sang as he brought the sea's gifts to the people—

"Because the shoe-maker laughed as he nailed a new last in the sky—

"God, how you bayed in the fouled mangers of your courts, your clubs, your counting houses!

"God, how you wolfed the lean bone of your nothingness!"

Now it is done; the fish peddler goes free; the shoe-maker walks well shod in a temple you cannot defile.

I think you will be quiet a little now; deaf old men soon learn not to speak much.

Scarcely you chose at all; every man to his poison and yours has been a long time brewing.

We, who heard the death rattle, might have spared our pains.

The wheel turns; gentlemen, I think the earth is a little sick of you.

Brown men, yellow men, black men, women and little naked children will walk these lanes

Have you not seen how the sick fields welcome the new blood?

Be quick, the old lilacs, the wild indifferent laurel will feed on your bones.

Be quick, I would not have one laurel bell less pink for your delay.

James Rorty



# LYNCHERS IN FROCKCOATS

By MICHAEL GOLD

IT is August 14th, eight days before the new devil's hour set for the murder of Sacco and Vanzetti. I am writing this in the war zone, in the psychopathic respectable city that is crucifying two immigrant workers, in Boston, Massachusetts.

All of us here fighting for the two Italians are without hope. We feel that they will burn. Respectable Boston is possessed with the lust to kill. The frockcoat mob is howling for blood—it is in the lynching mood.

If the two Italian workers do not die it will not be the fault of cultured Boston. The pressure of the workers of the world will have accomplished the miracle. But I repeat, the handful of friends working desperately here are without hope. The legal procedure in this case is nothing but a bitter joke. The blood lust alone is real.

You can't understand this case unless you are in Boston now. You must mingle with the crowds at the newspaper bulletin boards on Washington street, hear sleek clerks and ex-Harvard football players and State street stock brokers mutter rancorously:

"These Anarchists must die! We don't want this kind of people running America!"

They whisper, they fidget, they quiver with nervousness and fear, they jump like cats every time a pin drops. The city has lost its head. The atmosphere is like the war days, when George Creel's skilled literary liars were scaring everyone with the news that the Kaiser's airplanes were about to bomb Chicago, New York and San Francisco.

Those who sympathize with Sacco and Vanzetti in the street crowds keep their mouths shut. They are as unpopular as a Northern friend of the negroes would be at a Southern lynching bee.

Most of the well-dressed well-mannered Boston bourgeoisie are frank in saying Governor Fuller should not have granted a reprieve. They openly accuse him of being too soft.

The city is under martial law. The entire State militia has been brought into Boston, and is quartered on the alert in the armories. The police are on 24-hour watch, equipped with machine-guns, tear-gas bombs, and armored cars. No meetings are allowed on the Sacco-Vanzetti case. If you wear a beard, or have dark foreign hair or eyes, or in any way act like a man who has not had a Harvard education or Mayflower ancestors, you

are picked up on the streets for suspicion.

You must not look like a New Yorker. Two New York women, Helen Black and Ann Washington Craton, were arrested and questioned at a police station for the crime of looking like New Yorkers. You must not need a shave. Six Italians in an automobile who had come for the demonstration on August 10th were arrested and held on a bombing charge because two of them needed a shave.

Detectives dog you everywhere; yes, those stupid, criminal, blank

Jewish needle trade workers and Communists from New York. There were five young Finnish working girls from Worcester, Massachusetts, two of them under the age of fifteen. There was John Dos Passos, the splendid young novelist, and Dorothy Parker, a gay, sophisticated writer of light verse and satirical plays with a flavor of social conscience. There was a group of Italian workers, some of them Anarchists. There was a group of young Communist workers from Chicago and New York. There were iron-workers,

man in this city says he has never seen respectable Boston in as tense a mood as now.

"If this were the South they would not wait for Governor Fuller but would storm the jail and lynch Sacco and Vanzetti," my friend said.

But Governor Fuller is in the lynching mood, though he feels constrained to decorate it with Puritan legalities. And President Lowell of Harvard is in that mood, and all those who have conspired one way or another to execute the two Italians.

They will kill Sacco and Vanzetti legally. They are determined on revenge. For decades they have seen wave after wave of lusty immigrants sweep in over their dying culture. For years these idealists who religiously read Emerson and live on textile mill dividends have had to fight rebel immigrants on strike.

New England is dying culturally and industrially. The proud old libertarian tradition of the abolition days has degenerated into a kind of spiritual incest and shabby mediocre pride of family. The inefficiency of the blueblood factory owners has pushed the textile industry South, where there is plenty of cheap, unorganized and un-rebellious native labor.

So these ghosts, these decadents, these haughty mediocre impotent New Englanders have flamed up into a last orgy of revenge. They have the subconscious superstition that the death of Sacco and Vanzetti can restore their dying culture and industry. At last they have a scapegoat. At last they can express the decades of polite frosty despair.

They are as passionate against these Italian workers as white Southerners toward the negro. They know that New England is rotten from stem to stern, and that the slightest match may prove the brand to start a general revolt in the industrial and political field. They will not be moved from their lust for a blood sacrifice — these faded aristocrats. They are too insane with fear and hatred of the new America.

All I can see now to save Sacco and Vanzetti is a world strike. Nothing less stupendous can shake the provincial Chinese wall of this region. Boston is not conducting a murder case, or even the usual American frame-up—it is in the throes of a lynching bee, led by well-spoken Harvard graduates in frockcoats.



Drawing by Emil P. Maurer.

## ROAD WORKER

detective faces haunt you everywhere, in restaurants, in drug-stores while you are having an ice cream soda, in cigar stores, even in toilets. At night you can rise like Shelley from your dreams and stare below into the moonlit street and see a knot of evil, legal detective faces, watching you lest you go sleep-walking.

It is highly dangerous to be out in the streets after midnight. A group of us, after a hard day's work at the headquarters, went searching for a restaurant at 12:30, and were followed, not by four or five of the detectives, but by a whole patrol wagon load of them.

I was one of those who picketed the State House on August 10th, the first date set for the murder of Sacco and Vanzetti. Forty of us marched up and down the concrete walk between the elm trees near the Common, gaped at by a vast curious mob of Bostonians and police and detectives, and from the capitol's ornate balconies, by the official flunkies of Governor Fuller.

Our picket line was a good cross section of the sentiment that has been aroused in America and the rest of the world. There were sailors, jewelry workers, barbers, bakers, educators, agitators and waiters. There was finally a little fiery Anglo-Saxon aged 62, who made a speech in court affirming that he was opposed to Anarchism, was a Harvard graduate, and wanted justice for the two doomed men, for all of which he was fined \$20.

Dorothy Parker and I were arrested by the same brace of iron-handed policeman. As they hauled us off on the long walk to the police station, a crowd followed after us—a well-dressed Boston mob, of the type that lynched Lovejoy during the abolition days.

Some of these respectables booed us, and several of them hooted and howled:

"Hang them! Hang the Anarchists!"

That is the mood of respectable Boston at this hour. A friend of mine who is a veteran newspaper-



*Drawing by Emil P. Maurer.*

**ROAD WORKER**



*Drawing by Emil P. Maurer.*

**ROAD WORKER**

# WHITE MAN — A STORY

By GRACE LUMPKIN

I WENT to see Alma Lee's mother today. She and her husband and two little boys had a tent in the Red Cross camp for flood refugees. Alma Lee's mother is my half-sister. She was born in a cabin on my father's plantation up in northern Louisiana in Madison county. My father had a large place about fifteen miles along the Mississippi, beginning at Cabin Tiel and stretching down opposite Vicksburg. But it had to be sold to pay the mortgages and I went to Baton Rouge to teach school. Alma Lee's father was a share-cropper on the place, and he stayed on after it was sold. His cabin was not far below Cabin Tiel and close to the river.

After I began teaching school I kept on visiting Alma Lee and her mother. My conscience made me. If I had inherited money I would have given them some of that and it would have ended the matter, as far as my conscience was concerned. Going to see them didn't help any. They wouldn't allow it somehow. I don't know why I kept going. I'd travel up there and sit in the little cabin close by the yellow, sluggish river and talk a little trying to bring things around to tell them why I was there—that I owed them something. But if I tried to get personal Alma Lee's mother would laugh, and they'd talk about the river and the crops and I would get side tracked. They were pleasant enough, even humble with me. But underneath I felt antagonism or maybe a contempt of me. It made me mad sometimes after I had left. But I'd always go back once a year at least. I was interested in Alma Lee and I wanted her to get an education. But they side-tracked me on that. I hadn't much money anyway. A school teacher's salary just does carry her over the three months vacation. Maybe they realized that. But maybe, too, they didn't like half-way measures. Yet what could I do? If I told everybody that these colored people were my relatives people would think I was crazy, and I would lose my position. So I kept on salving my conscience by going to see them like that, and trying to do something for them. It didn't do any good. I always came away baffled and often angry at them because they wouldn't understand the position I was in.

Then I decided to do something without letting them know. I had some friends in Vicksburg, and I recommended Alma Lee to them, and asked them to find her a place as a servant girl with some nice

people who would let her go to school in the mornings. I knew that Alma Lee's mother was ambitious for her and would persuade her father to drive her into Vicksburg in their wagon every other Monday morning, and go after her when she came home. I made my friends in Vicksburg promise that they would see that Alma Lee would get home every other week, because I knew how fond her mother was of the girl, and I asked them to try to get her a place as nurse maid so she could live in the house and not have the extra expense of lodging. My friends wrote me that it had all been arranged, so I was very well satisfied.

Later I went to see Alma Lee's mother. She was very glad about the arrangement, and I had a triumphant feeling. I felt more satisfied than I ever had after a visit to them. The ice was still there—even under the laughing and joking and agreeing with everything I said I felt it. But I didn't mind so much any more.

Alma Lee went to work in December. I visited her mother in February. Some time in April I got word from her mother that she wanted to see me. I felt good over that. But I felt bad, too, because I thought it must be some trouble that had made them turn to me. I had been planning to go up there again anyway because the first levee had broken on the Arkansas and I wanted to urge them to get away while they could save everything they had.

When I got to the cabin Alma Lee was there by herself. Her mother was in town helping some white people move and her father and brothers were at work piling sandbags on the levee. Alma Lee was sitting in a cane-bottomed rocking chair by the chimney. It was a small cabin, with one big room and a leanto that was Alma Lee's bedroom. They cooked in the fireplace.

Alma Lee sat in the chair and rocked and told me the news. About the work on the levees, and that the river had risen, but not more than in other flood seasons—and that the leanto had caught fire from sparks from the chimney and burnt a hole in the roof, so she had to move her pallet into the big room.

It was raining outside and Alma Lee said, yes, the rain would probably make the flood higher. Outside we could just hear the river moaning along. I was a little afraid. But Alma Lee said they were going to move in plenty of time, maybe in a day or two. She

didn't seem concerned at all. Just sat there and rocked and rocked—not fast. She was too relaxed to rock like some women do in nervous little jerks. She made me feel that she never wanted to move again, except that slow motion, backward and forward. Her body seemed to be a part of the rocking chair—spread out sluggishly into every corner of it. She was a nice looking girl. I believe I would call her lovely as she sat there. Her head was flung back and her neck had a beautiful taut curve. Her head rested heavily back on her shoulders. From where I sat her turned up face, dark brown like old wood worn by use to a beautiful even darkness, had a tormented look like it was trying to detach itself from the sluggish body underneath. The head and shoulders went together. The rest of the body that rocked so slowly belonged to the chair.

I said a few things. That they ought to be getting out soon. I had said that before, but it was very difficult to find something to say. The rain had been coming down hard on the roof. It sounded like the chattering of people outside the church at a country funeral. But now it had let up suddenly as conversation does when everybody sees the hearse coming a long way down the road, and just a few drops hit the shingles as if people were saying short, whispered words about the dead person and the sorrowing family.

It was in that quietness Alma Lee began talking. She didn't stop rocking and she kept her neck strained taut all the time. She was looking up at some spot on the ceiling, and kept her eyes fixed on that.

She said she was going to have a baby. I asked her if her mother knew. She said no, and she didn't want her to know. Her mother was worried though because she didn't feel so well, and because she had lost her place in Vicksburg. Her mother had wanted her to get some education. Alma Lee said she had wanted it, too. And she knew she had to get it for herself, because share-croppers never had any money, so her father couldn't help. If crops were good one year, they were usually bad the next. They always owed the good crops. When the chance came to go to Vicksburg Alma Lee said she and her mother were very glad.

She was nurse to Sonny, five-year-old boy of a lawyer in Vicksburg. Miss Eloise, the lawyer's wife, was going to have another

baby. At first Alma Lee went to school every day, but so many things turned up to be done around the house she didn't get time for school and had to stop. She didn't tell her mother that though, because school was the one thing they had been counting on, and then by the time she had stopped school there was another reason why Alma Lee wanted to go on.

Alma Lee said Miss Eloise stayed in bed in the mornings. Alma Lee had carried her breakfast up and she had liked looking at Miss Eloise sitting up so comfortable in bed with lots of pillows. The room was so pretty. It had yellow organdy curtains with lavender and yellow ruffles around the edges. And there was a cover for the bed made of yellow silk. Miss Eloise liked frills, and they looked pretty around her. Alma Lee said she would sit up in bed and drink her coffee and talk to Alma Lee about Sonny, or ask her to do something extra around the house, because she was sick and couldn't. Alma Lee was glad to, she said. Miss Eloise was so pretty and asked in such a nice way. I asked Alma Lee why she didn't beg Miss Eloise to let her keep on going to school. She said she did ask her once if they couldn't arrange the work so she could go every day. But Miss Eloise wouldn't let her talk about that. Alma Lee said she sat up straight in bed and looked so excited Alma Lee was afraid she'd be real sick. She said, "Alma Lee, one of the finest women I've ever known, was my old black mammy—and she couldn't read or write a word. I respected her, Alma Lee, but I don't respect these young niggers with their newfangled notions. My husband doesn't either."

I asked Alma Lee if they let her go home. She said yes, that every other week her father brought her back to the cabin. I said it must have been good to get back. She said it was, her mother was so glad to see her. Sometimes she put herself out a lot to make things homey for Alma Lee, but she was too tired to do much. Alma Lee wanted to get some organdy in town and make some frilled curtains, and her mother liked the idea, but they couldn't get enough money. The first time she met him down by the willows, Alma Lee said, he offered her money. She wouldn't take it at first, but then she remembered the curtains and let him give it to her. But she couldn't think of any good reason to give her mother for hav-

ing that much money so she buried it down there in the Indian mound where they met.

I asked Alma Lee who it was she met. And she said Miss Eloise's husband. She said it had begun when she first went there. Only she didn't realize it was beginning then. He liked to come in some nights and hear Sonny's prayers and tell him stories about King Arthur. He would make Sonny stand up and say "My strength is as the strength of ten because my heart is pure." Alma Lee said Sonny was very earnest about it, and his whole body would shake from trying to make his voice sound deep like his father's. Alma Lee thought her liking him began then because after Sonny had been put to bed, sometimes he would stop and ask her about the little boy and what he had said and done during the day. He was very kind to her. Then one day he brushed against her in the hall, and at another time he pushed her up against the wall and pressed against her. He said excuse me and went ahead. But other things like that happened, and then he told her to meet him at the willows the night she was at home.

Every time she slipped out of the leanto and went down there, Alma Lee said, she was afraid, thinking about what would happen if Miss Eloise or her mother found out. She thought they would surely search her out. She said those willows down the river was their place—the levee was low there and the ground was marshy, but the Indian mound was above the marsh, and covered with soft grass. She had played there when she was little and thought about the old Indian chief being buried along with arrow heads and caly pots. She had tried to tell him, Alma Lee said, about that, but he hadn't wanted to talk much. Once he did tell her that she was like the river, running smooth and easy without hurry or fuss. Alma Lee seemed to like to remember that. Her throat relaxed and her eyelids drooped. She told me she had answered back that sometimes the river gets on a rampage. But she laughed, and said, "But you are not that kind—you are my slow, docile river running to the gulf, and I am the gulf waiting with my arms furrowed through the delta—waiting to receive you and take you to me." Alma Lee must have said that over to herself many times. She repeated the words as if she knew them by heart.

I said something like that to her. She said yes, she did remember his words sometimes, but his voice was the good part about him. Usually his words didn't mean so much to her as the way he said them. She could believe what Miss Eloise had told her, that he had

studied to be a preacher. At the house many a time he would talk to company as if he was preaching and she loved to listen to the boom boom that came out of his throat. No matter what he said she could feel that sound and be satisfied.

One time, Alma Lee said, after supper she was out on the lawn letting Sonny play a little before she took him up to bed. Sonny's father was on the porch with Miss

I asked Alma Lee if she had seen him lately. She said no he hadn't been around for a month, now, since Miss Eloise had found out and told her to go. The cook must have spied on her and told. One day Miss Eloise had sent for her to come upstairs and had got after her, and called her a bad girl, and what a disappointment, after all she had done for her, giving her her own old shoes and dresses,



Drawing by Wanda Gag

## FARM PICNIC

Eloise and some people that had come for tea. He was talking and his voice coming across the lawn got into her. He had been talking about white people. She went closer, keeping one eye on Sonny. He said he had just read about a white girl marrying a Jew. Somebody interrupted him and said, "Well, Jews are human beings." And he said, "Yes, and so are niggers, but you don't marry them." That came out rich and full. He had that wonderful voice. Alma Lee said he knew he had it, too. She said he took pleasure in his own voice just like Sonny when he hollered in the bath tub and listened to his voice going all around the bath room walls. That evening when he was talking, Alma Lee said she made Sonny come up even closer right by the porch to play and she sat on the steps in the shadow of the wisteria vines, listening some more. While she was down there getting Sonny to come up she had heard his voice roll out like a preacher's. He said, "Thank God I am a white man." When he saw her on the steps he came over and stood by her in the dark and went on talking. She didn't hear anything else he said because his leg was pressed against her shoulder and she didn't want to listen. But the sound of those other words thumped in her, like a steamboat does, *white man, white man, white man*.

and extra money sometimes. Alma Lee said she didn't know what devil got into her, but she had answered back. And Miss Eloise had told her not to be impudent. Sonny was there, and funny how a little one like that would feel ugly words like they were using, and get the sound of voices. Alma Lee said when she talked back he said, "Don't you talk to my mother like that." He took up for his mother right away. Funny, when she had put him to bed and dressed him and all—pretty cute of him taking up for his mother. She thought maybe he felt it about her being a nigger. Once Alma Lee had been in the next room and had heard him ask Miss Eloise if she would eat with a nigger and Miss Eloise had told him no and he mustn't either. Anyway, when he told her to hush like that Alma Lee said she didn't talk any more. She went out of the room and got her things and Miss Eloise paid her and she came home and hadn't seen anything of any of them since. She had been to the Indian mound twice, but it was scary down there without anybody waiting.

I asked Alma Lee some questions and she answered them. It looked as if now she had begun she didn't care how much she talked. But she did ask me not to tell her mother. "Tell her I've got malaria," she said. "That's what I've told her. When I went to see the doctor I got some chill and

fever medicine and I take it to make her believe." I asked her how she would keep it from her mother. She said she didn't know. Her neck sagged down—then. She said probably she would go away. I said I wanted to help. I felt it was a responsibility. So Alma Lee promised that she would come into Baton Rouge and see me. I told her I would send the money right away and she agreed that it was the best plan. After I made her promise that I went away.

Day before yesterday I got word from Alma Lee's mother to come down to that Red Cross camp where the family was staying. Alma Lee's mother asked me if I'd gotten any news of the girl being found by rescue parties. I told her I hadn't. She said they had left Alma Lee at the cabin with the boys. They were to pack up the things and bring them into town on the wagon. She went over and over it—telling me how well Alma Lee had packed everything, wrapping the dishes in newspapers, helping the boys and making a place for the chickens and the hog. When they had fixed everything in the wagon Alma Lee had made her brothers go ahead with the wagon. She had said she wanted to rest a while and that she would walk to town. She sat down on the doorstep of the cabin and they left her there. Alma Lee's mother and father hadn't met up with the boys until the next morning. They had spent the night in the barn of the white people they had been helping. When they went back to the place where the cabin was they couldn't get anywhere near it. It was all covered with water. But they saw the cabin. It had floated down and a big willow tree had caught in the hole in the roof of the leanto and held the cabin there. There wasn't any sign of Alma Lee.

All the time her mother was talking I kept on thinking about what Alma Lee had told me and how I was the one who'd gotten that place for her. I kept on wondering whether Alma Lee's body that had rested so heavily in the rocking chair had held her down on the step of the cabin when she had really meant every minute to get up and go, or if she had stayed there, wanting the flood to come and take her.

I told Alma Lee's mother I'd look everywhere and see if I could find any trace of her. But I don't think it will do any good. I think Alma Lee must have gotten caught in the willows. Or maybe the river took her on down to the delta. I don't know. But I think I won't go to see Alma Lee's mother any more. There doesn't seem to be any use.





*Drawing by Wanda Gag*

## **FARM PICNIC**

# LITERARY GELDING

By KENNETH FEARING

GRANTING that there is a great deal of logic in the argument for having a Book-of-the-Month Club, or a Literary Guild, or a First Edition Society, the question still more sharply arises: Why do all of these projects seem so undeniably absurd, even nauseating? Especially the Literary Guild of America (Inc.).

Consider the last. Its board of six editors is supposed to choose one book a month that will be "humanly important, interesting, and worth owning." A book "which will be a permanent part of your life . . . a classic of the future." It is the aim of the Guild to distribute these guaranteed Grade A classics to tens of thousands of readers every month and by this mass distribution to cut the cost of them in half, at the same time doubling the profits of the guaranteed Grade A authors of these books, and of the guaranteed Grade A editors who have selected them. It will be seen instantly that the only x-quantity in this otherwise known and certified equation of Author, Book, Committee, and Reader, is the Reader. It cannot be proved that the Reader is a Classic. But, God bless you! as soon as he subscribes to the Guild he, too, becomes Grade A.

It is all right, and it is all wrong. The Editor-in-Chief and controlling spirit of the Literary Guild of America, Mr. Carl Van Doren, is undoubtedly the most competent literary middleman in America. He has the reputation, justly earned, which is a middleman's chief capital: a reputation for being alive to contemporary tendencies and authors, long after they have become generally accepted, and for writing contented essays upholding them; a reputation for subscribing to "dangerous" points but not for insisting upon them; a reputation for being kindly. The other members of this board, save Mr. Joseph Wood Krutch, are strictly vague. They are: Glenn Frank, Zona Gale, Hendrik Willem Van Loon, Elinor Wylie, and they are known to be liberal, or literary, or something.

What are the chances that this committee will ever select for distribution an uninteresting or thoroughly bad book? None. What are the chances that the Guild, First Edition, Book-of-the-Month Club will ever select a book of more than transient interest? Slight. What are the chances that one of these societies will ever grab off a new book that is actually important? None. Presumably, every book chosen by the Guild

must in some way run the gauntlet of its committee, and then get past Mr. Van Doren. In other words, it is to be a monthly Pulitzer Prize Award. Or like an *Atlantic Monthly* contest. But that is not the worst of it.

The subscribers to the Guild, who are to number perhaps 100,000, those people who are to be reached and educated, will certain-

the arrival of a vacation, an increase in salary or fishing season."

"You have solved my problem for me. Have drifted into the magazine and newspaper class and simply couldn't shake off the lethargy. Many thanks for the opportunity."

It cannot be done. The readers will docilely submit to being entertained; they will even endure a certain amount of Thanatopsis Club culture, feeling that they should. But—imagine that it is some years ago, and the Guild has

Robinson had been fumigated by two Pulitzer Prize awards, long ago—long after his finest work had been written and buried. It remained for the Guild, the *New York Times*, and the United Clubwomen to join hands and place an expensive lily on the breast of a well-arranged and almost life-like corpse—*Tristram*.

Still, the Guild will be a good thing. Mr. Dreiser says of it: "There must be thousands of people in the United States who now read good books occasionally, but who would read them habitually if they had a chance. It seems to me that the Literary Guild will do a great deal to give them a chance, and I am heartily in sympathy with the undertaking."

It is not possible for anyone to be heartily in sympathy with the undertaking, not even Mr. Dreiser; but the Guild *will* be doing a "good thing." It is so harmless, so nice, and it has such possibilities.

But why not extend the idea? Here we have, or did have, no less than three separate book-of-the-month clubs; unless the growth of these societies is checked, they will do nothing less than create, all over again and worse, the very situation which they were created to destroy, namely: The confusion of good books with bad. What if there should be, some day, a dozen book-of-the-month clubs! Which would have the right book? Would the reader have to subscribe to all of them? Could the United States government furnish a committee which would say, as the Guild now does: "Mountains of books! Some of them merely tradesmen's output written, frankly, by men who write books as a factory turns out products" . . . and could the government committee then go on to say that the books of such-and-such a Guild or Society were really the right books?

No! The movement must be the other way. Let us ask Mr. Van Doren to be the Editor-in-Chief of an International Culture Guild. His associates will be Mr. Hugh Walpole, the greatest living English lecturer, and the ghost of Matthew Arnold. It will be the task of these three not only to select the book of the month, but the best Book-of-the-Month Club; and to select the Play-of-the-Week, the Thought-for-the-Day.

And the International Culture Guild (child of the infant Literary Guild of America, Inc.) should never forget its humble beginnings:

"The sweet tooth as opposed to the keen mind. In America per person we spend \$18.15 for candy, ice cream and soda to \$1.10 for books; or over 16 times as much for sweets as for books."

The answer is: sweeten the books.



From a Woodcut by Hanns Skolle

## VISITOR'S DAY — SING SING

ly not stand for too much culture. Their most exuberant testimonials show that, clearly:

"I am very pleased with the first set of books I have received, and I am sure that many teachers and instructors in the Kankakee School system would be pleased to hear more of your splendid literary service."

"The arrival of a Guild Book is anticipated with the same joy as

selected Mr. Dreiser's first edition of *Sister Carrie*, Mr. Cabell's first edition of *Jurgen*, Mr. Sandburg's first or second volume of poetry! Or try to imagine the Guild now sending out thousands of copies of *Ulysses*!

When the Literary Guild got its audience to swallow Mr. Robinson's *Tristram*—think of sending poetry to thousands of people!—it accomplished a miracle; but the miracle was a futile one. Mr.



*From a Woodcut by Hanns Skolle*

**VISITOR'S DAY — SING SING**



*Drawing by Diego Rivera*

**"THE RIGHT TO BEAR ARMS"**

# ZAPATA'S GHOST WALKS

By JOHN DOS PASSOS

*The State of Morelos (named after the revolutionary patriot, José Maria Morelos) with a population of 160,500 and an area of 7,184 sq. kilom., is bounded on the North by the Federal District, on the West and Northwest and Southeast by the State of Mexico, on the East and Southeast by the State of Puebla and on the South and Southwest by Guerrero. Magnificent mountain chains cross the region, which is marked by tall peaks, deep valleys, gorges, waterfalls, luxuriant tropical vegetation, fine sugar-haciendas, Indian temples, towns and citadels . . .*

From Terry's Mexico

THE sun is hot and white on the dust of the market, on the small square awnings in the blue shade of which the Indian women, heavy as granite idols, squat behind minute piles of peppers or oranges or onions. There's a heavy smell of fat from the pork crackling that seethes in a huge cauldron in front of the cantina. From inside, on the sour cool rankness comes an old man's voice singing to a guitar. He is singing a corrido called *The Ghost of Zapata*. People stop talking when they hear the name of the song. Brown faces, yellow faces, are motionless under huge pushed back straw hats. This is Morelos where Zapata ruled.

*Pero su alma persevera  
en su ideal Libertador  
y su horrenda calavera  
anda en penas . . . oh terror . . .*

*You can hear the jingle of his spurs  
his scaring voice once again  
as, teeth gritted in a curse  
he shouts the orders to his men*

*and raising a limp hand in command  
he leads a white and silent host  
of dead men across the southern land  
dead Zapata's walking ghost.*

This is Yautepec, blue, white, pink and lilac-splotted streets rambling among humped shiny mango trees. All the big houses have been burned or are falling to ruin. They keep sheep in the parlors of the old haciendados, chickens and turkeys go pecking between the tiles of abandoned courts, there are ducks setting in the counting houses where the overseers used to keep the accounts and figure out how much the peons owed the landlords. In a square where everyone walks round in the evening, you don't see any foreign clothes, men wear white cotton suits like pyjamas, and broad petate hats, and girls dark shawls and full skirts.

One afternoon I climbed the hill. Two men were sitting at the foot of the cross. We stood smoking together and looked over the plain towards the huge barrier of reddish

jagged hills that culminate to the northeast in the shadowy smoking peak of Popocatepetl. The fat man pointed out the churches and the abandoned sugar factories. "See, *senor*," he said, "the green squares where there is cane planted, and the brown squares where there is none. In the old days it was all green. See those sheds, those are the mills where they crush the cane. There used to be eighteen in the district here and several refineries. Now they are all idle. There are no machinists to run them. The machines are all rusted. But then eleven men, Spaniards most of them at that, *gachupines*, maybe one or two were *gringos*, owned the whole state. "Well aren't you better off without them?" "*Quien sabe senor?*" The man who was talking was a fat man in a threadbare khaki suit with bushy moustaches that had a melancholy droop to the tips. He addressed himself mostly to his friend, a little wiry coppercolored Indian with a few streaks of whisker at the corners of his mouth, who squatted on his heels and smiled and said nothing. The fat man was of a yellowish color and enjoyed talking.

"Hernan Cortes was a wise and great man, one of the ancients, the great conqueror," he went on greasily. "When he came to Morelos he founded the first church and the first sugarmill side by side in Tlaltenango near Cuernavaca. Who knows, maybe he knew what he was doing." The little Indian almost laid his hand on my knee, then he pointed with it to the town that shone in the dusk among the mango trees. "There was too much fighting here in the time of the Zapatistas, but now the priests have gone, the landowners have gone, the middlemen have gone, there are no bandits in the hills or in the cities, we are all united." "United to starve," said the fat man, "and the governor in Cuernavaca is a *sinverguenza* and the managers of the cooperatives were *sinverguenzas*, the next revolution will be against the *sinverguenzas*." The little Indian looked up deferentially at his fat friend and smiled and said nothing.

That night I was sitting in the doorway of the hotel. There was an old brown man with a white beard with whom I had been dickering about the horse I was hiring in the morning. When we had settled about the horse he sat beside me and started talking. He talked so low into his beard I could not catch all he said. "Good Don Porfirio," they say, in the good old days . . . That is not true. Those days were very bad . . . good for the rich maybe, but there

were very few rich men, in this town perhaps five or six and their families . . . For the poor . . . I had a wife and three children and suddenly they came and took me away. Nobody would say why, maybe it was all a mistake, because I have always been a quiet peaceful man. Maybe it was about a horse Don Abundio wanted to buy . . . I never knew. In the box car there were other poor people, old men and boys, some of them were criminals from the jail. We were shut up in the



From a Woodcut by Lowell Hauser

## Corridos Singer

box car for days and days and then in the boat. I couldn't eat or sleep thinking of my wife and the littlest child who was a little girl. I thought every day I was going to die. Then when we got to Yucatan we were marched many days across a trackless country with foul water to drink and those who got tired fell down and the wild Indians killed them, and every day I thought I was going to die. . . . We stayed there for years building roads and every night they flogged someone. Then they told me to go home and I had to beg my way to Merida. My son who was already a grown man came and fetched me home. He found me sitting in the street in Merida. I didn't know him because I had remembered him a little boy. You see they had sent me letters, but every time I tried to read the letters my eyes filled with tears so that I couldn't read them."

The state of Morelos is the great example for all the dollar-minded of the failure of the agrarian revolution. The sugar-landlords and their families have filled two continents with their lamentations over the ruin of its rich industries. They have formed an association and probably most of them live richly in Neuilly and on the Riviera; meanwhile their interests have fallen into the hands of three banks, the Banco de Londres y Mexico, the Banco Na-

cional de Mexico and the Banco Germanico de la America del Sur. These banks are constantly sponsoring projects to "put Morelos on its feet" and certainly their faces are not unknown in the various claims commissions that hover on the outskirts of Mexican politics always ready to back a revolution or hinder the operation of a useful reform. The government has tried to remedy the situation by promoting the culture of rice, as sugar is a crop that with the present market can only be grown under slave conditions. There are various "enlightened capitalist" projects in the air to reorganize the whole state on an industrial basis, of which the most favorably seen in Mexico City is that of the Honolulu Ironworks Company to centralize irrigation and the refineries, at the same time leaving the land in the hands of the peasants. Naturally the land, without water or factories, won't do the peasants much good, so they do not look with great enthusiasm at these foreign projects. Meanwhile, as in the bad times in the Bible, every man lives as best he can under his own vine and fig tree and is a law unto himself, and the state is bankrupt and the roads and ditches and towns are falling into weedy ruin, and the great hopes of Zapata and his men still stalk the land unappeased.

## II

## IN THE HILLS

It was sleeting in our faces as we crossed the last rocky gulch. Some cultivated land, a few trees, adobe cubes of houses, the top facade of a church hove in view on the soaring slope above us as we floundered through the slimy mud of the track. Broad-faced men standing in the lee of the low houses in the hardtrampled courtyards received us with shouts: "*Viva los Agraristas, Viva Zapata*," Antonio and his father and all his family came out and embraced us and made us sit in the house that was one long room with a broad bed of boards at one end and a sort of altar in front of the door. Outside the sleet had turned into a downpour and the young men were shooting off skyrocket into the rain.

A dozen people told us the story over bowls of warm *pulque*. The village from time immemorial had owned an *ejido*, a tract of surrounding land, part of it pasture, part of it worked in common by the families of the village that inherited its compactness from the Indian tribe that has some time settled it. In the days of the good Don Porfirio the owners of the neighboring ranch





*From a Woodcut by Lowell Hauser*

## **Corridos Singer**

with the help of lawyers and gendarmes had gradually encroached on the village lands, first claiming the right to pasture and eventually forcing the villagers out entirely. They had to eat, so having no lands to work of their own they were forced to work for the ranch owners, who would so generously cede them the use of corn patches and advance them credit. So from free villagers they became in two generations peons. This until the "bandit" Zapata started riding through the south with the war cry of "Land, Water, Schools." The Mexican owners of the ranch had long ago gambled it away to an absentee Spanish company. At the first ping of the bullets the overseers fled and the villagers quietly installed themselves in their birthright. Then divisions began within the village. The priest and a small group who had made a little money in towns or by dealing in cattle stood out against the rest of the village. They owned bits of communal land themselves and were quite content to let things ride as they were. The priest went off with documents stored in the church showing the ancient boundaries. The landless villagers sent delegations to the capital, received promises from one *politico* and the other, but as soon as the *politicos* were elected they were all for letting

things ride. Meanwhile nothing was settled. Government engineers came and made surveys that somehow always came out in favor of the landowners who were working through a powerful lobby in Mexico City. *Politicos* came and went. Nobody had a clear title to the land so nobody dared work it. While the Indians stood guard with guns in their hands, the hard won fruits of the revolution were melting away behind their backs. There was little corn for the *tortillas*, beans were almost unknown; the young men were slipping away to the cities or taking up highway robbery. What were they to do? Now we had come, two men and a woman dressed in store clothes, speaking foreign languages, versed in the great movements all over the world, friendly with the Russians (in Morelos they called the Bolsheviks "the Zapatistas of the east"). Now we would help them; they were children lost in a lonely village in the mountains, far from roads and railroads and they wanted to feel they could work their land in safety, and they needed help.

The rain had stopped. They walked us up the hill through a scattering of houses to see a great cypress surrounded by a little fence that seemed to be the sacred tree of the village. Everyone spoke very respectfully of it as if it were a person;

at Christmas they celebrated the nativity of Christ in the little well-swept enclosure round the trunk. They showed us from a distance the Church and the priests' house and the houses of the enemies, as they called the small landowner faction. "I bet they're looking out of the doors wondering what we're doing with visitors from the capital," said Antonio, and gave out a tremendous shout of *Viva los agraristas, viva los comunistas*. As we were winding down the little lane again we had a scare. A party of men with guns came striding towards us out of the hilly pastureland. The boys didn't set off any more rockets, everyone was quiet until they came within hail. Then the strangers shot their guns in the air and let out a great cry of "*Viva Zapata*"; they were *gararistas* from the next village. At the shout all tension vanished. The men of Amonalco were not alone any more. In hundreds of villages they had brothers who stirred to the same cry, men who dressed, starved and drank *pulque* the way they did. Their leader was dead, but his name had power to bind and to loose.

What they lacked, the old men said as they all crowded back together into the house, was a leader, a leader who thought and lived as a countryman. They were tired of trusting engineers and surveyors and

lawyers, men in black suits and Stetson hats, from the capital. They were very disappointed next day when we started on our walk back into the Valley. They had hoped we would stay and help them with advice and counteract the wiles of the surveyor who was at that moment trying to whittle down the size of the *ejido*. The communist said he would send them back comrades to advise them. "*Viva los comunistas*" they cried. We left them at the edge of the glen, a little group of men in white cotton suits, uneasy, hungry, leaderless, isolated, a fragment of a defeated nation, standing blinking, dazed in the light like a man just broken out of jail. When the Carranzistas killed Zapata they thought the agrarian movement was dead; his ghost walks uneasily and until it is laid Mexican politics will be perpetually unstable. Insofar as the Calles government has worked out this problem, it has a united country behind it. The redistribution of land cannot be finished in a month or a year, and until it is finished there is always danger that something will upset the hard won equilibrium.

*But his soul still perseveres  
in the will to liberate  
and his skull goes out in tears  
his dead bones walk . . .*



PICNIC ON THE CLIFFS

Sketch for a Painting by Boardman Robinson



**PICNIC ON THE CLIFFS**

*Sketch for a Painting by Boardman Robinson*





**PICNIC ON THE CLIFFS**

*Sketch for a Painting by Boardman Robinson*

# BACK TO EARTH, 'GENE!

By CHARLES ASHLEIGH

IT WAS in Buenos Aires, in 1911. I had been in the Province of Corrientes, engaged in the construction of a hundred miles of telegraph, to link up Paraguay and Argentina. After living for months in tents, and supervising a work-gang of Guaraní Indians—who were extremely fine people to work with—I was back in the florid modernity of the great city on the River Plate.

I had been away for about a year. Some of my old friends had left; and I had not yet met others. And, that evening, I was feeling pretty lonely.

It was too warm for a theatre; and I was tired of the noisy and over-decorated cafes of the Calle Florida or the Avenida de Mayo. So I wandered down to the untidy streets which stretch the length of the miles of docks.

I dropped into a seamen's cafe, to kill a half-hour. The place was full of men and tobacco smoke. Tables were thumped, and voices raised. The syllables of a dozen languages clashed, but English, in American or British varieties, predominated.

There was no vacant table. So I picked one where a single customer was sitting—a rather morose, sturdily-built, dark young American.

I ordered a glass of beer. A mulatto pianist seated at an instrument on a low platform in the back corner of the room, pounded out popular tunes. Now and then some husky stoker or deck-hand rose, walked lumberingly and self-consciously to the platform, and full-throatedly bellowed out a sea song, or perhaps a mournful sentimental ditty of inordinate length.

My depression remained. I ordered another "schooner" of beer. My companion also appeared to be subdued, and looked with black-brown boredom on the scene. I took him to be second or third mate of an American vessel, or perhaps a young ship's engineer.

Half an hour passed. Neither of us had said a word. Then my mood exploded into speech:

"Good Lord, I'm sick of this," I said. "I haven't talked with a soul all day."

My companion straightened up, and looked at me with faint awakening interest.

"Nor have I," said he. "Have another drink?"

So I had another drink. And, in about ten minutes, we were well launched: discussing sailing-ships and steam ships, Conrad and Keats, the mountains and ports of South America, politics and the theatre. I specially remember Keats, because, at that time, O'Neill was writing

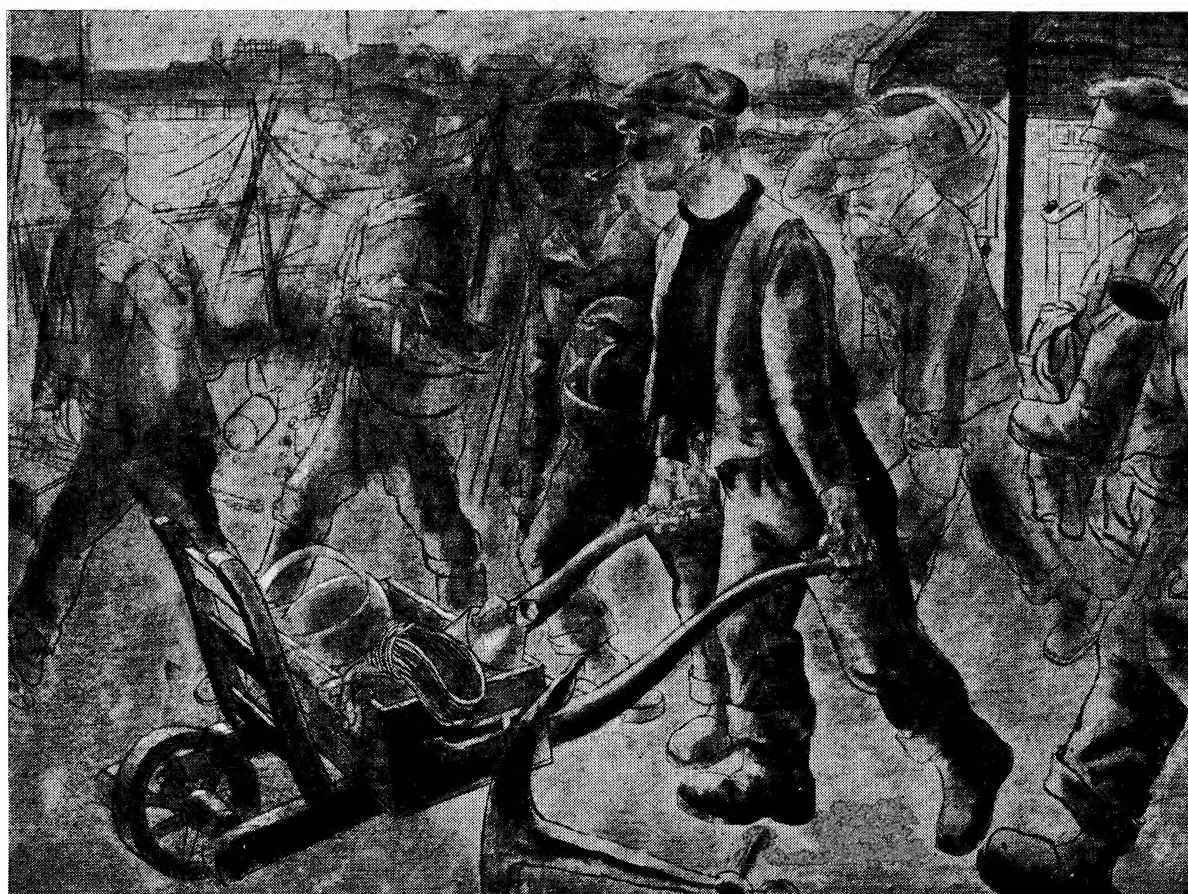
poetry, which appeared then to be his main interest. I also was trying to write verse; and I remember how we each produced manuscripts from our pockets, exchanged them across the sloppy table, read, discussed, criticized.

O'Neill had worked his passage to Buenos Aires in a sailing ship. He

plays which began to appear. I did not meet him again, because we were never in the same place. But, in the first book of one-act plays—in *Moon of the Carribees* and other raw, but authoritative bits of fore-castle life, I could see O'Neill engaged in crystallizing, into sharp, moving forms, the experiences of his deep-sea journeyings.

There were the actions, the reactions, the pungent talk of the men—stokers and deck-hands—confined in

spent in Boston—O'Neill turned his attention to those obscure dramas of the soul, which engage the repressed folk in the more remote parts of that area. *Desire Under the Elms* and other similar plays, deal with this phase of American life. Always there is revolt—a somewhat blind revolt, it is true, for no way to freedom is indicated, for these poor souls, trapped in boredom and emotional starvation, from which, in O'Neill's plays, the only escape is in



Courtesy, Galerie Flechtheim, Berlin.

From a Painting by George Grosz

## NORTH SEA FISHERMEN

had left the ship in Buenos Aires and, after a spell of unemployment, had just located a job with an American firm of machinery manufacturers. He was to start work in a few days.

We sat up all night, talking, talking, with the ardor and exuberance of youth. We ranged the world, conversationally, and I don't know how many "schooners" we consumed, during the debauch of talk. And then, at dawn, we parted, agreeing to meet the next day. I was looking for rooms, at the time, and arranged to move into the Irish-American boarding-house where 'Gene was staying.

After that, there were many nights of savory talk, and of long, inquisitive wanderings around Buenos Aires, together with this young vagabond, sailor, poet, who was later to be acknowledged as America's foremost playwright.

As the years went by, I could find again the O'Neill I knew in the

the narrow limits of the fore-castle. There, also, was the calm beauty of tropic nights, stained with the rancid fevers of the debauchery of sailors. There was the itch of the wander-fever, that clinging, fretting ill, which afflicts seamen, and other world tramps, and turns sour the souls of men tied down to work on the soil or in cities. Of this stuff, O'Neill made his fine play *Beyond the Horizon*. And into it he put the travel-longings of his own earlier life. Also, there jutted out, here and there, in the fabric of his plays, that social irony or protest, which was part of the inevitable reaction of this young idealist who had passed through the more sordid places of the earth. This latter quality also appears in the *Hairy Ape*, although it is modified and blurred by the mysticism which was already gaining upon him.

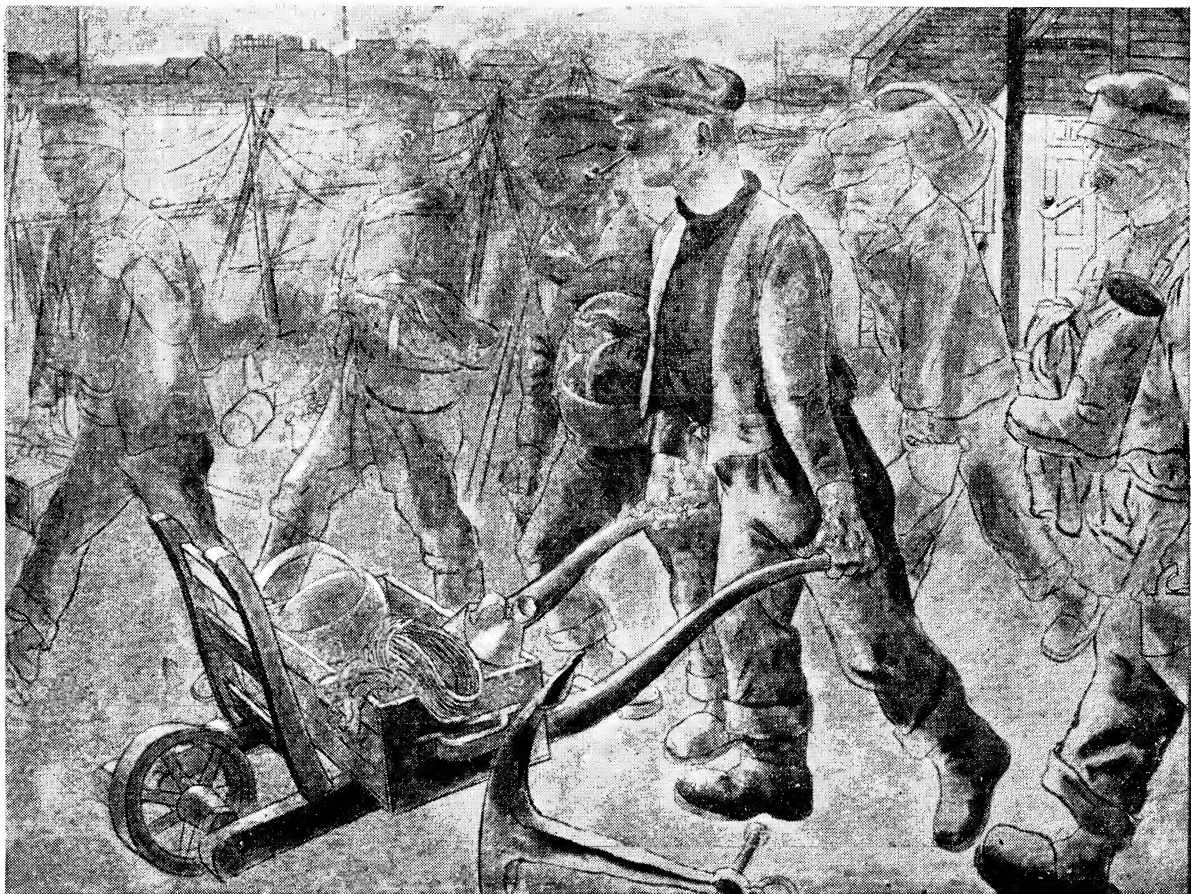
Settling in New England, his native country—his early life was

violence and death.

Again, in the case of the Negro, we have O'Neill's instinctive, and perhaps unconscious, preoccupation with the more suppressed and trammelled divisions of humanity. He who has been one with seamen, with tramps, and others who suffer so often from homelessness and a sense of social insecurity, can understand the problems which beset the Negro, as he can the despair of the frustrated small farmer. In *All God's Chillun Got Wings*, and in *Emperor Jones*, we have an understanding of Negro psychology which is not merely acute, but also sympathetic.

Slowly, as the days of vagabondage recede, we find the scene changing. The sea has ceased to beat, with insistent rhythm, through his plays. The American modern scene, in all its complexity, gains upon him. And he perceives the tragedies of the city middle class. He, also, goes for material to *Babbitt*, and we have *The*

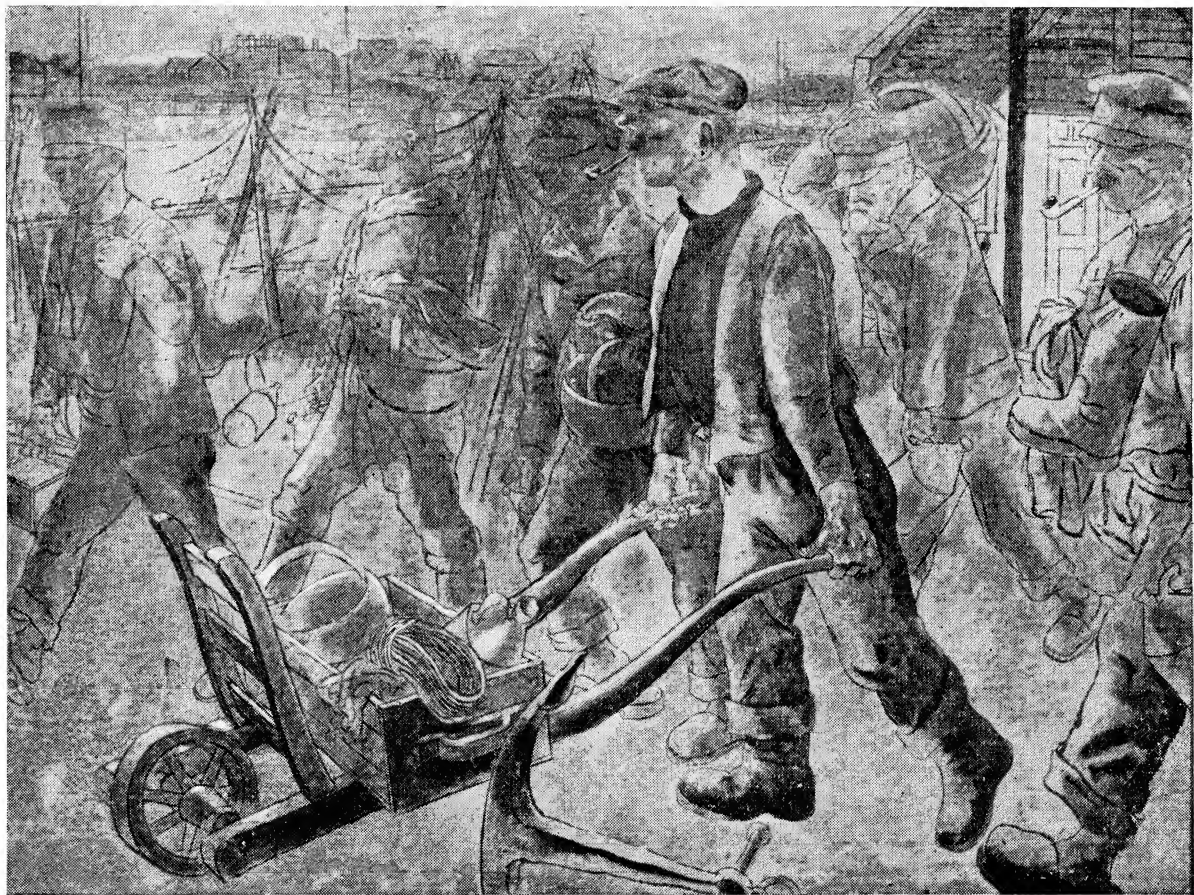




*Courtesy, Galerie Flechtheim, Berlin.*

*From a Painting by George Grosz*

## **NORTH SEA FISHERMEN**



*Courtesy, Galerie Flechtheim, Berlin.*

*From a Painting by George Grosz*

## **NORTH SEA FISHERMEN**



Drawing by Jan Matulka

*Them was the good old days. When grass was high as yer head and there wasn't a fence this side of Chicago.*

*Great God Brown.* The fertile history of American colonization seizes upon his imagination, and *The Fountain* is the result. Strangely enough—or is it so strange?—as the battling, active past recedes, his plays show, more and more, a mystical apprehension of the universe. He has himself been so long divorced from sudden physical movement, from the turmoil of wanderers, that the wind and waves of his isolated Connecticut home speak to him no longer of the struggles of ships and their crews, but drive him deeper into introspection, and into those dark labyrinths of doubt and speculation where wander the souls of some who, after liv-

ing a highly exteriorized life, are later condemned to inactivity.

Thus, even the sharp, definite pessimism of his earlier work has given way to something less keen-edged, although hardly more enheartening. In *The Great God Brown* we find the struggle of man with his own personality, and with the personality of others—complicated by the fact that the real character is so often obscured by an assumed one, which, through years of custom, becomes eventually an inseparable part of the original individuality. The mask grows onto the face—actually becomes the face! And, there seems no hope, no way out of this inextricable tangle of de-

ceits and frustrations. In this play, only the simple woman—the “bad woman”—pierces through the deceit. Perhaps here is O'Neill's solution: the elemental, rugged directness of simple people, the people of the soil and the workshop, is the only corrective for sick souls, the only health which is left in society. But, if he does mean this, he points his meaning very tentatively. He is perhaps afraid of the accusation of being a propagandist. At any rate, it is the workmen, the soldiers, the sailors, in his plays who act with a certain tonic clarity and absence of nagging reservations and afterthought. Perhaps O'Neill himself is most

akin to these people, and his recent excursions into an unsatisfying mysticism are attributable to the fact that he has been, for too long, only a playwright. In the daily struggles of the sea, in the continuous drama of industry, there he might, perhaps, find a rich and revivifying source, a *Fountain* from which our explorer may drink and renew his powers.

I have written the above because I feel that there is something lacking in O'Neill's latest plays. While his first plays naturally may show the technical defects of one new to his medium, they did most certainly bring us close to the roots of life—and there is nothing esoteric or mystical about the roots of life. They bore an authoritative stamp: they smelt—reeked, if you will—of our common existence. In his latest work, despite all he has learned about technique—and it is considerable—there seems to me to be a faltering, a view less clear and profound, and an attempt to fly to a vaporous refuge, from the pitiless pursuit of reality.

But “Gene” is still young. He will, I hope, give us many more plays. And, I am sure, one of these plays will synthesize the later O'Neills with the O'Neill I knew. There will be the rich craftsmanship of the mature playwright; the wider knowledge of one who has rested in cities, as well as sweated on long trails; the suppleness of a mind which has tested ideas and systems. And all this, I hope, will be mated with the adventurous eagerness and courageous acceptance of all life, the treasures carried in the knapsack of my vagabond friend in those good days when we first met.

## INCENTIVES

The engineer who was showing me around the Baku oil fields took me down to the edge of the sea, where the oil wells protruded several hundred feet into the water. He explained:

—There is oil under the Caspian. The problem was how to get at it. We knew that if we could invent the right machinery we could triple our oil output. A number of us have been up nights trying to invent something. I think we've got it. Two of my comrades and I have invented an improved method of drilling.

—What do you get for it? I asked.

—The invention belongs to the country. I might receive a 2,000 ruble prize; but that's not important. The important thing is whether the invention will work or not. If it does, we shall all benefit by it.

He told me later that his spare time was devoted to Party work, and to lecturing to political classes of the Young Communist League.

*Joseph Freeman*

## YE COCK-EYED WORLDE

## EXCAVATIONS By WILLIAM GROPPER



*Coolidge chooseth not to run in 1928.  
Whereupon four black horses are harnessed,  
and yearneth for ye race.*

*"I shall goeth my way." Thus spake ye  
Standard Oil of New York.*

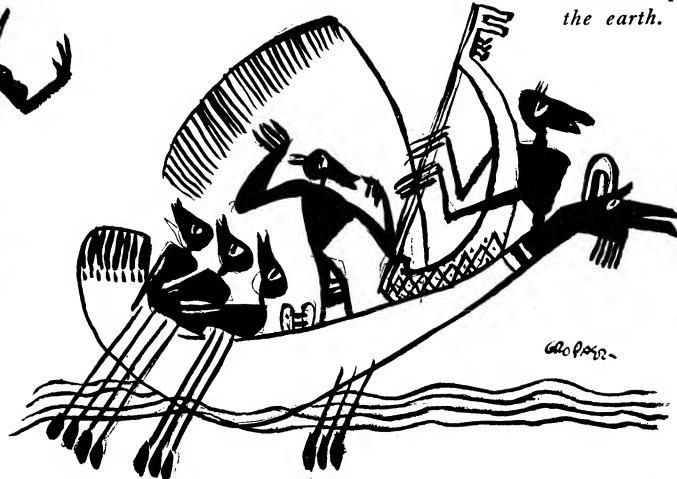
*"Ye hell ye will!" Sayeth ye Standard Oil  
of New Jersey.*



*Ye Governor Fuller  
gayly signeth ye death  
warrant for Justice,  
that government of, by  
and for ye gentlemen  
shall not perish from  
the earth.*



*Alas, ye lords of nations hath already dis-  
cussed ye length of ye speare and re-  
turneth saying: "So's ye olde man!"*



*Ye Goode Will Marine Corps, "seeing ye  
Worlde" in Nicaragua, killeth 300 Nic-  
araguans. Ye damned foreigners were  
obstructing ye view.*



*Ye beloved I. R. T. receiveth ye  
beloved A. F. of L. and ye train  
men getteth as little milk as before  
but striketh not (for ye love of  
Michael).*

*At the news of Cool-  
idge's "choosing", ye  
lambs and bulls of  
Wall Street doeth ye  
song and dance act.*



*Ye devil ariseth in ye Grand Wiz-  
ard D. C. Stephenson of Indiana to  
open ye black box of ye foul smells.*



# AMERICA COMES TO DIKANKA

By ALBERT RHYS WILLIAMS

ALEXANDER ANDREEVITCH PITRENKO introduced himself one morning in the Dikanka bazaar, exclaiming: "I've got a letter from America. From the Silver Republic!" Taken aback for a moment, then I understood—it was from the Argentine Republic. From Buenos Aires, his brother was writing: "Now is the time to come. A new section is opening up. You can buy land for 20 rubles an acre."

All his life Alexander Andreevitch Pitrenko had lived cramped up on one acre of land. All his life he had dreamed of wide expanses, long black furrows turning behind a yoke of cream-colored oxen, wide pasture for the oxen to graze upon. Always these lands were in America. For him America was just another word for land. Years ago his brother had gone away, while here in Dikanka he had awaited a letter almost breathlessly. Now it had come telling of new ranches opening to settlers, telling Alexander Andreevitch to come along.

"When are you going?" I asked him.

"I'm not going at all," he answered. "I don't have to go to America. America has come to me."

Instead of journeying ten thousands of miles across seas, Alexander Andreevitch had only to cross the road to the Soviet Land Bureau. Here was his dream come true. Land, not at low prices—but for the asking, for nothing at all—good land too, better than in America, rich black loam.

He had gotten fifteen acres of it, an orchard, three years exemption from all taxes. So, only ten versts away from his old home, he became a settler and in a dugout sodden with grass he lived like a pioneer. Now and then a strange pioneer loneliness came upon him, relieved by a drive down to the village.

Around Dikanka hundreds of Pitrenkos had been set up, with a complete farm, thousands had added to their holdings.

To the peasants the Revolution was an act of Creation. Fire, storm, blaze and thunder of cannons—the convulsion of a continent—then out of this chaos, land emerging, vast areas of it and theirs to have and to hold.

To this end the peasant had battled for centuries, fighting under the banners raised by the Pugachevs and Stenka Razins, suffering floggings and exiles, beaten back again and again, but through the

darkest nights of Russian reaction, ever dreaming of the day when the land would be his. And now it was his. The dream was reality. 40,000,000 *dessyatines*—an area as large as England—had passed into his hands. Every peasant in the Ukraine nearly doubled his holding. Fifty-five per cent of the land belonged to the peasant. Then the Revolution and 96 per cent of it was his.

"The lands of the crown, the monasteries and the landlord, are hereby declared the property of the nation forever." Thus reads the land decree passed on the night of November 7, 1917, while the smoke had hardly died from the guns of the Aurora firing over the Winter palace. Thus the miracle is recorded.

Alongside of this stupendous fact goes another almost as stupendous—the passing over of the fact in silence. One would think that paeans of joy would signalize such magnificent realization of their hopes. Instead of that, a silence almost universal. Out of thousands of peasants whom I have picked up in casual conversation, I can count upon my fingers the Pitrenkos who volunteered, "I got a *dessyatine* of land out of the Revolution." All the others sedulously concealed it. As in Dikanka, so elsewhere.

There was the loquacious basket weaver from Novgorod, with whom I had converse for many months. This barefooted *batrak* had received a 10 *dessyatine khutor* as I learned a year later and accidentally. From him not a word.

There is the garden village of Zhoozhin, three versts from Moscow, where the peasants have increased their holdings two, three and even five fold. From them you may hear long discourse about fruit stealers, bad roads, laziness of laborers—everything under heaven. But about their rich inheritance, never a hint.

There are the peasants down in the bread-basket of the world—the Volga basin. How often on the ferry gliding across the river they have told me dismal tales of the *mgla*, the Dryer (Sookhoyer), the grasshopper invasion, the blunders of the state grain buyers and Soviet agronomists. But the lands carved out for them of the Medem, Davidov, Dacboronsky estates, and out of the *koolak* tracts—rich black steppe soil in which the wheat grows rank like weeds—about this never a word. Never a word until they see that I am not an innocent.

Then they will admit it, but with reservations and evasions, concealing the amount of their gain.

Is this the silence of dread? The fear that he may have to return the land and pay with stripes on his back for taking it? In the early years of the Revolution there were certain peasants whom nothing could induce to settle on the landlord's estates. But now this plays no part, for the peasant is pretty well convinced that the landlord has gone to stay.

The real reason for this silence one must find in the peculiar peas-

the poor Cossacks the soldiers caroused, plundered and violated at will. A Cossack would go to Kochoobey protesting.

"Why come to me?" the old Prince would say. "I can protect only my own peasants."

"Make we one of yours then!" the victim would plead.

His name was accordingly written down in "the book"—with his name went his land. Thus by indirect action the boundaries of the Prince were extended 5, 10 or 50 *dessyatines*.

Sometimes it was direct action as in the case of Cheiben, of the 10 ruble gold piece, related to me. "My great grandfather had 15 *dessyatines* of woodland which took the eye of the old Prince. One morning great grandfather went out to chop down trees and found forest guards there who told him to keep off. When he wouldn't they gave him the *nagaika*—five strokes a *dessyatine*. It's my land now and I've got a *nagaika* for any Kochoobey who steps on it."

The Revolution was the repatriation of the soil. The Cheibens were simply coming into their own. Why then should they break forth into paeans of praise for getting that which by every natural and legal right was theirs? Especially when they had redeemed it in the battle and blood of seven years civil war.

It is the Communist of course who directed this battle and led it to success. The peasant knows this very well. It is the basis of a deep fundamental allegiance to the Communist. It is deep in his consciousness, though it may not be upon his lips. So the peasant deceives the foreigner—sometimes the Communist—and always the great *emigres* statesmen of Paris, Prague and London think that because the peasant doesn't express gratitude he doesn't feel it; because he isn't loud in his loyalty he doesn't have it; fools, deceiving themselves because they want to be deceived. Do they think that the peasant can ever forget the political party that put 40,000,000 *dessyatines* of land under his feet?

Besides the peasant's conviction that in obtaining the land he is obtaining only high rights, there is another consideration that holds him back from breaking forth into psalms of rejoicing, and particularly restrains him from thanksgiving to the Communist. In the craftiness of his peasant soul he knows that benefits received mean obligations incurred—duties to fulfill—services to perform—to acknowl-



Sketch by Boardman Robinson

## Turcoman

ant minds and conceptions. First of all his attitude towards land and its ownership. The American would say simply enough: "The land belongs to him who owns it." The Russian peasant says: "The land belongs to him who works it." In the words of the delegate to the Peasant Congress of 1905, "Land is the gift of God like air and water. Only he who applies his labor to it should have it, each according to his needs." This is the only fundamental inviolate right, all other claims are fictitious. Why then make a fuss over the getting of his simple rights?

Furthermore why should he make great ado over the restitution of that which was stolen from him? Sometimes it was stolen in the grand manner of Ekaterina bestowing largesses upon her lovers.

Sometimes it was piecemeal by trickery as with the old Kochoobey. "Himself a Cossack, he robbed even the Cossacks." When troops from the North were billeted on the village, good order was maintained in the houses of Kochoobey's serfs, while in the houses of





*Sketch by Boardman Robinson*

**Turcoman**



*Sketch by Boardman Robinson*

**Turcoman**

edge favors is to assume responsibilities. Better, then, say nothing about these benefits. Better not talk about what the Revolution has given him, but what it is taking away from him. Better concentrate, for example, on taxes.

That's what Dibenko was doing one morning I came into the Soviet. Taxes were robbery. The Soviet, brigands! He called on me as an American to behold in him a man brought to ruin. I stopped his eloquence with the curt question:

"How much land, Dibenko, did you have before the Revolution?"

"None," was his reluctant answer.

"How many *dessyatines* now?"

"Twelve," more reluctantly.

"How much a *dessyatine* is it worth, if you had to buy it now, how much would you have had to pay?"

"Dibenko tried to wriggle away, but I pinned him down. He had to admit that his land was the best black loam—worth 400 rubles a *dessyatine* at the lowest estimate—4,800 rubles it would have cost him. And his taxes were 46 rubles! Not one per cent interest on the value of his land received gratis.

"Now honestly, Dibenko," I asked taking him aside. "About the land, why is it that you never say a word?"

"Why should I?" he laughed.

"I've got as much as I want. The land isn't troubling me. I'm going to talk about what is troubling me."

Thus all over the Soviet Union the peasants like Dibenko as deliberate policy are keeping to the front their grievances. In meeting, izba, boat, train, one can hear them chanting the litany of their woes: high taxes, high prices, of city goods, low prices on grain, lack of horses, misdeeds of Communists and the Soviet—all the evils that justly or unjustly have been laid to the account of the Revolution.

Scarcely a hint from the peasants about benefits received from the Revolution; deliverance from servile obedience to officers and

landlords; the right of his own language, culture and religion; the path of learning cleared for him right into the university; the right of free and unlimited criticism; the shortening of war service; the hundreds of new cultural devices; mail ring-posts, izba reading rooms, tractors and electricity—and above all, that supreme conquest of the Revolution—the land. Of all this on the lips of the peasants scarcely a word.

But does this mean that he is not fully aware of these conquests of the Revolution, and the political party which helped him achieve them?

If you will, call the peasant crafty, ungrateful, cunning, but do not call him a fool.



Drawing by Xavier Guerrero

## MEXICAN ARMED WORKERS



**MEXICAN ARMED WORKERS**

*Drawing by Xavier Guerrero*



**MEXICAN ARMED WORKERS**

*Drawing by Xavier Guerrero*



# TWILIGHT OF CHIANG KAI-SHEK

By P. T. LAU

As I write these lines, Chiang Kai-shek's career as a military dictator has ended and his eclipse demonstrates again that the day of the war lord in China is done. The inevitability of Chiang's collapse, once he betrayed the revolution, will no doubt serve as a useful lesson to future generals of the People's armies.

The "Identic Notes" were delivered on April 11. Immediately following the delivery of the Notes, General Chiang Kai-shek, then Commander-in-Chief of the armies of the Nationalist Government, publicly declared his split with Hankow, seat of the Kuomintang. Chiang's action was seen as a split between the conservative and radical, or right and left, wings of the Nationalist Party of China, and caused much concern to sympathizers with Chinese Nationalism and equally great elation to its enemies.

Foreign interests and newspapers lauded Chiang, expressing the hope that he would "lead the Nationalists aright" so that they would adopt a "reasonable" and "generous" attitude toward foreign interests.

Through his newly-appointed Foreign Minister, Dr. C. C. Wu, General Chiang did promise to be reasonable and generous. Conservative sympathizers with the Nationalist movement professed to see the hope of a united Nationalist China controlled by Chiang. Many announced that the influence of Moscow, having served its turn, had come to an end. Shanghai bankers and merchants pledged a loan of \$30,000,000, Shanghai currency, to Chiang's government. Pessimists saw the Nationalist movement again thwarted and another militarist in the saddle who would play the role of Yuan Shikai, but more successfully.

## Causes for the Split

Superficial observers have tried to convince us that the split was due to the Nanking incident. According to them, when the "Identic Notes" were delivered, on April 11, the Powers seemed to "mean business." War measures were resorted to all along the Yangtse Valley from Shanghai to Nanking and Hankow. A hundred and fifty foreign warships were about to go into action. Another more drastic note, amounting to an ultimatum, was to be delivered if the "Identic Notes" were not immediately complied with. Therefore, as a great

EVENTS move so fast in China that news becomes stale before it is printed, and among the hosts of special pleaders, the true facts of a situation are hard to arrive at. The two writers presented herewith, from their different points of view, seem to come to the almost identical conclusion that the future of the Chinese revolution rests with that party or group which can ally itself most effectively with the workers and peasants. Will Hankow profit by Chiang's mistakes?

statesman, some claimed, General Chiang broke away from the Nationalist government and formed his own "moderate" government to turn the wrath of the Powers. But that sort of reasoning neglects the underlying, fundamental factors in the situation.

The real cause of the split, as announced by the Hankow government, was that General Chiang wished to have a free hand, inde-

pendent of Party control. In short he aspired to the power of an absolute monarch. He sought to free himself from the supervision exercised over all the Nationalist generals by the Central Executive Committee, the Finance Committee and the Military Committee of the government. He found the Party discipline inconvenient and the rules of the Nationalist government distasteful.

## TEN MILLION PEASANTS

By EARL BROWDER

The Wuhan Government, in its majority, was composed of bourgeois and intellectual elements, who relied upon the armies recruited from the old feudal-militarist forces in large part, for their foundation. They have always looked upon the labor and peasant movements as auxiliary forces, rather than the foundation of the revolution. Therefore, with the betrayal of one general after another, Chiang Kai-shek followed by Feng Yu-siang, and these two by a host of little "generals", the majority of the Wuhan Government got cold feet and began their surrender.

Does this mean the liquidation of the Chinese revolution, as the imperialist press so loudly asserts? Not at all! The Chinese revolution is only now getting well begun. Not one of its problems is yet solved. Not one of them can be solved by the military leaders who for the moment have political power, not by any one of them or by all of them in combination. The Chinese masses are now organizing themselves; ten million peasants are in their unions, and almost three millions in the trade unions. To think that this massive force can be stopped, while the economic and political problems of China remain unanswered, is to believe in miracles.

And the Kuomintang, as the

symbol of the unity of workers, peasants, and petty bourgeoisie of the cities, is by no means dead. Betrayed by its Central Committee, it is already reorganizing itself and continuing the struggle. The withdrawal of such figures as Madame Sun Yat Sen and Tang Yen-ta from the Government in protest against the betrayal, and their announcement that they will continue the fight for the principles of the Kuomintang, is proof enough that the workers and peasants have not lost all their petty-bourgeois allies to the counter revolution.

This is a period of deepening of the Chinese revolution. While it is a most difficult period, which is sacrificing many of the best and finest men and women of the Chinese revolution, it will lead, not to defeat but to victory for the masses of China. Workers of all lands must mourn for our martyred comrades, who are being daily executed by the counter-revolution; a large percentage of the comrades whom I met and worked with in China, and whom I admired and loved more than I can say, have already been killed in the few months since I first arrived there. It is a black and dismal page of crime that has been written by Chiang Kai-shek and his dupes and accomplices. But it will surely fail in its object of stopping the revolution in China.

He insisted upon putting his own men at the head of the Central Executive Committee of the Party. As far back as March 20, 1926, he used his military power to force Wang Ching Wai, chairman of the government's Central Executive Committee, to resign and go into exile. When the seat of the Nationalist government was moved up from Canton to Hankow, he maintained his headquarters at Nanchang Kiangsi, in defiance of the wishes of his superior, —the Central Executive Committee.

Finance Minister T. V. Soong reported that the monthly receipts of the Nationalist government amounted to \$15,000,000, of which \$13,000,000 was turned over to General Chiang for military purposes. Out of this fund \$600,000 a month was supposed to be sent to General Feng Yu-hsiang for the Nationalist army of the Northwest, but this amount was never given as directed.

Because Eugene Chen, the foreign minister, was unwilling to take orders from him, Chiang decided to make C. T. Wang the foreign minister. This was disclosed by the Japanese consul at Shanghai, who received the information direct from C. T. Wang himself. General Chiang finally appointed Quo Tai-chi as Commissioner of Foreign Affairs, without consulting the Central Executive Committee, and long before this he sent his private representatives, Tai Tien-chau and Wu Tiet-ching, to Japan to negotiate for Japanese support.

All these steps were taken in total disregard and in defiance of party principle and party discipline. Accordingly, the Hankow Nationalist Government denounced General Chiang Kai-shek as a new militarist and another monarchically ambitious Yuan Shih-kai.

## Camouflaging the Issue

In order to justify his *coup d'etat* Chiang Kai-shek invented the slogan: "Rid the Hankow government of the Communist influence." This was designed to arouse sympathy from the foreign interests and from Chinese identified with them, and it was cleverly done. Wonderful results were achieved at first. But such camouflage is shy of sunlight. All the people cannot be deceived all the time.

First let us examine the case historically. During the reorganization of the Nationalist Party effected by the First National Representative Conference in 1923:

prolonged debates lasting for weeks ended with the admission of the Communist Party to the Kuomintang. It was only through the powerful and unyielding attitude of Dr. Sun Yat-sen that the Conference decided to join hands with Russia and admit the Communist Party. Anything short of Dr. Sun's personal insistence and unbending will would have failed.

At that time Chiang Kai-shek was the most ardent supporter of Dr. Sun's program. The personal correspondence between Dr. Sun and General Chiang discloses that the reorganization of the Kuomintang with Soviet advice and support was entrusted entirely to the hands of Chiang and later developments bear this out. Chiang's ascendancy was due entirely to this arrangement.

He was a close follower of Dr. Sun and has genuine ability; but he had never held any real military power, the highest military post held by him up to the time of Kuomintang reorganization being that of chief adviser to General Hsu Shung-chi of Canton.

In view of his later utterances, it must not be forgotten that Chiang travelled to Moscow at that time to arrange the details of Russian cooperation, and upon his return to Canton, he took charge of the Student Cadet military school at Whampoa, assisted by Russian instructors. The school opened with about 200 students. From this humble beginning the Student Cadets made the Nationalist armies famous and General Chiang rose with the corps.

Historically speaking, General Chiang's ascendancy was due entirely to his Soviet associations. The program of "purging Hankow of the Soviet influence" should, therefore, never have come out of the mouth of General Chiang.

Again, the manifestoes, adopted by the conferences of the National Representatives of 1923 and 1925, and further strengthened by "the Will" or parting message of Dr. Sun, made it a principle of the Nationalist Party to join hands with Soviet Russia and to admit the Communist Party into the Kuomintang to assist in the organization of the peasants and workers.

### Chiang's Betrayal

After usurping supreme military power, General Chiang set aside this principle. He reversed the Party decisions and killed peasants and workers just as mercilessly as any old-time militarist. He denounced Communists as criminals, to be butchered without due process of law. And any one who dared to oppose him, no matter what his affiliation, he declared to be a Communist. Having no legal

basis for setting up his government at Nanking, he declared the Nationalist Government at Hankow to be Communist or under Com-

munist control, although of the 36 members of the Central Executive Committee only three were known to belong to the Communist Party. When General Chiang broke off only six out of the 36, including himself, followed him to Nanking. The Central Executive Committee, in other words, was overwhelmingly against him, as are all the other party committees.

It is plain that Communism was not the issue between General Chiang Kai-shek and the Hankow government. The real issue was:

Would General Chiang control the Party and through it control the country? Or would the Nationalist Party control itself and the country?

General Chiang, according to news reports, appeared to have powerful support: the foreign Powers; Chinese and foreign industrialists and bankers; high military officers in the North and South; and many of the Nationalist Party branches in various parts of the world whose members still cling to the hero-worship of the feudal period.

### Reign of Terror

At the present time Chiang is bolstering up his power by the most ruthless terrorization. In collusion with the British, Chiang searches all ships passing up the Yangtse River and persons whom he suspects of being hostile to him are denounced as "Communists" and court martialed. Raids, searchings and roundups of "Communists," which mean any labor leader, keep the Chinese city of Shanghai in terror. The British settlement now for the first time allows the extradition of political offenders, which means that any labor leader, suspected of radical leanings may be successfully demanded by Chiang's executioners.

But Chiang Kai-shek has bought his temporary success at too dear a price. Certainly he cannot count much upon Britain's partisanship, for while she helps him against Hankow, she is helping Peking against Chiang. And all the sincere leaders of the Chinese revolution of whatever political camp are agreed that the defiance of the Kuomintang executive committee by a military man will plunge China into the same pit into which she fell in 1911. By cutting himself off from the roots of revolutionary ardor, which comes from the people themselves, he can only maintain himself by continual compromise. He must compromise with the British for every bit of the half-hearted support they give him, he has undoubtedly compromised with the Japanese, as his withdrawal from Shantung clearly indicates, he has already begun to dicker with Chang Tso Lin, and he

has certainly accepted money from the bankers and industrialists. Thus he has betrayed the revolution at every point!

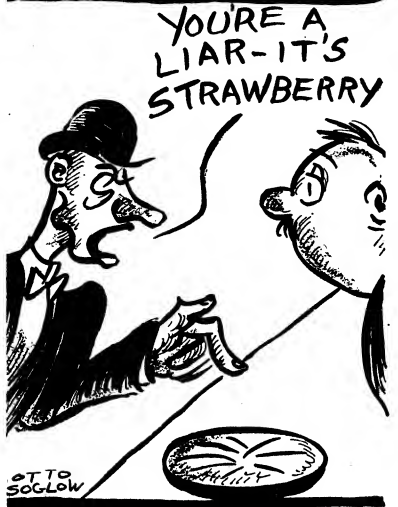
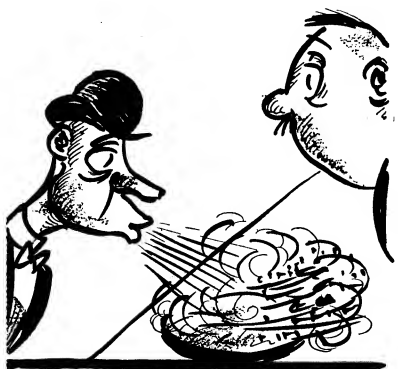
He must even compromise his power in the ranks of his own army, and share his booty with his officers and officials, for as fast as he abandons the revolutionary ideals, he must buy support at an ever increasing price from greedy underlings.

The abandonment of the revolutionary objectives exposes his soldiers to rapid demoralization, for just as soon as the living force of a righteous cause (as that which animated the first Nationalist army and made possible its amazing advance to the Yangtse), ebbs away, it is supplanted by the uneasy loyalty of mercenaries.

What is that force against which foreign battleships and the armies of ambitious war lords are, in the end, powerless? It is the awakened revolutionary spirit of the organized students, workers and peasants—a spirit which moves ahead of armies in the form of propaganda and wins battles before they are fought. Chiang won his successes with the aid of these slogans: "China for the Chinese!" and "A People's Government." And in his present role of usurper the power behind those slogans—the united will of the Chinese people for freedom from exploitation will turn against him. The progress of the Nationalist Revolution in the last two years demonstrates that individual ambition and feudalistic ideas have no place and cannot survive in the intense atmosphere of nationalism. Chiang's "purge China of Bolshevism" smoke screen will not get him very far—and he knows it. That line of propaganda didn't help Chang Tso Lin and the northern war lords against the Cantonese advance. In fact, just because anti-Bolshevik slogans secure the sympathy of the foreign concessionaires and of certain elements among Chinese banker and industrialists, they blunt the edge of the nationalist ardor, without which no movement in China can long endure.

The Chinese Nationalist revolution has had one lesson hammered home to it again and again since 1911—that compromise always spells ruin. General Chiang's downfall was forecast when he began to take in the defeated generals in wholesale in defiance of the Hankow government's instructions to crush them. There is no other way out for China now but to stick to the slogan adopted at the beginning of the northern advance: "Crush all opposing forces and reactionaries!"

Her deliverance from her enemies awaits the day when all compromisers have been swept aside.



WHAT KINDA  
PIE IS DIS?



PEACH



YOU'RE A  
LIAR-IT'S  
STRAWBERRY



# "THAT BABY REVOLUTION"

## A BOY'S LETTER FROM VIENNA

DEAREST MOTHER:

We have been through some damned exciting, hectic times since I wrote you last. Roy and I were right in the middle of that "baby revolution" over in Vienna. We were shot at twice and chased all over the place. But I will begin from the first.

I went out about 9:30 on Friday morning, July 15th, by myself to see the museums. Roy was working on a bust of Freud so I didn't bother him. The first thing I knew about anything wrong was when a big parade of men passed me by on the street. I noticed a sort of tension among the people but thought nothing of it. I went on calmly to the bank and got some American money changed. Then when I came back out of the bank and was walking past the parliament the fun began. There was a ring of policemen around the front of the parliament building and an immense crowd facing them mocking and jeering. The policemen tried to keep as calm as possible under the circumstances but they were pretty scared, I guess. The crowd kept getting more and more excited and I saw one hysterical woman repeatedly slapping a cop in the face. The cop didn't dare to make a move. If he had, the crowd would have had the excuse it wanted and would have literally torn that scared bunch of cops to pieces.

I never saw such an enormous crowd in my life. There must have been about a hundred and fifty thousand people that surged about in mobs wrecking things. I went around the corner and there saw a cop beaten to death. This poor old gray headed cop was *on his knees* begging for his life. He was beaten down onto the street and trampled on. When next I saw him through the many feet he was nothing but a shapeless, bloody, inert mass with most of his clothes torn from his body.

I have gleaned information here and there and I here attempt to give you the reasons for this "baby revolution". It seems that there was a perfectly peaceful camp of Communists out in the woods not far from Vienna. One day about three weeks ago a crowd of reactionaries calling themselves Nationalists (polite name for Fascists—aristocrats before the revolution) went out in the woods and started target practice right near the Communists' camp. They shot very recklessly and a party of Communists went out, *unarmed* to protest. Thereupon, the Nationalists pretending they were attacked

opened fire and killed two Communists and wounded three others.

The trial came up on Thursday, July 14th, and the Fascist Supreme Court Judge of the so-called Socialistic Austria ruled that the Nationalists be acquitted. On Friday morning the news got out and the Socialists and Communists decided to make a demonstration to show the Government their power. It seems as though they have done that several times before to show the strength of the unions, but never before to such an extent. Always peaceful picketing.

To get back to the mobs—they were getting more and more unruly. Woe betide the policeman that they caught alone. I was getting rather scared and started for home and noticed another crowd standing around some inanimate object on the street. I elbowed my way through and there before my eyes was a gory battered form with its two gouged out eyes lying on the street beside it. I started for home as fast as I could go to get Roy

but I had only gotten about half a block through the mobs when I was violently seized by the shoulder from behind and whirled around thus bringing me face to face with four great big men with barrel staves as clubs. I had on at the time a white shirt and collar and was obviously not a working-man. A yelling group began to gather around me. God knows what would have happened only by pure luck I had the Communist pin which you got in New York with me and I pulled it out and waved it on high. They all shouted and let me go.

I went back and got Roy and we went out into the street again. Not until after I had changed my shirt and looked a little bit less "unproletariatish", however.

When we got back to the scenes of action the crowd had shifted over to the Court House. First they started bonfires on the street in front of the Court House and then they got bolder and started to swarm through the windows and break down the doors. They threw papers, typewriters, desks, book-cases, everything out into the street where the mob broke things into

a thousand pieces. Roy and I had drifted around to another corner when the first shooting began. I sure was scared. Right down the street came a line of cops with rifles on their shoulders. When they were about 100 feet from the mob they unslung their guns and without any warning fired point blank into the mass of people. Did I run—!! Roy and I got separated in the flight and I didn't see him for about two hours. As I went running down the street a little fellow next to me stopped, whipped out a bugle and started playing the International. Several crowded around and started yelling "Zusamen!" (together), so they all chased back at the cops.

I went around on another corner from where the policemen were and there was another crowd yelling and pushing back the fire engines keeping the firemen from putting out the, by this time, roaring fire in the Court House. Then a hell of a thing happened. A troupe of mounted policemen came charging along to disperse the mob. Their swords were out and flashing in the air and they were met by a veritable hail of clubs, sticks and assorted missiles, ranging in size from pebbles to paving stones. I saw one cop knocked off his horse and stabbed with his own sword. I climbed up on a lamppost to get a better view of the proceedings and there Roy saw me. About that time more shooting commenced and we decided it would be best to go. So we legged it. We went over to the hotel where Miss Otter stayed and there we met Harry and waited for night fall. We went out about seven o'clock but kept out of the danger zone. We couldn't have gone in if we had wanted because there were lines of cops for blocks around. They had the situation pretty well in hand, it seemed, although there was an occasional shot and the streets were full of ambulances, death wagons, and Black Marias. In one place on the street was a pool of blood and on the wall was written "Rache ist Rache" (Revenge is revenge) in blood.

The next day, we were advised that the best thing to do was to get out of Vienna as soon as possible because there was a rumor of Hungarian soldiers coming. We had already applied for our Russian visas and as all Communists were being arrested daily in the streets it was best to get out. All the trains had stopped running so the next day Miss Otter arranged with Thomas Cook and Son for an auto to get us to Salzburg. We got German visas there and now we're here in Munich.

Affectionately,  
Wallace Rogers.



Drawing by William Gropper

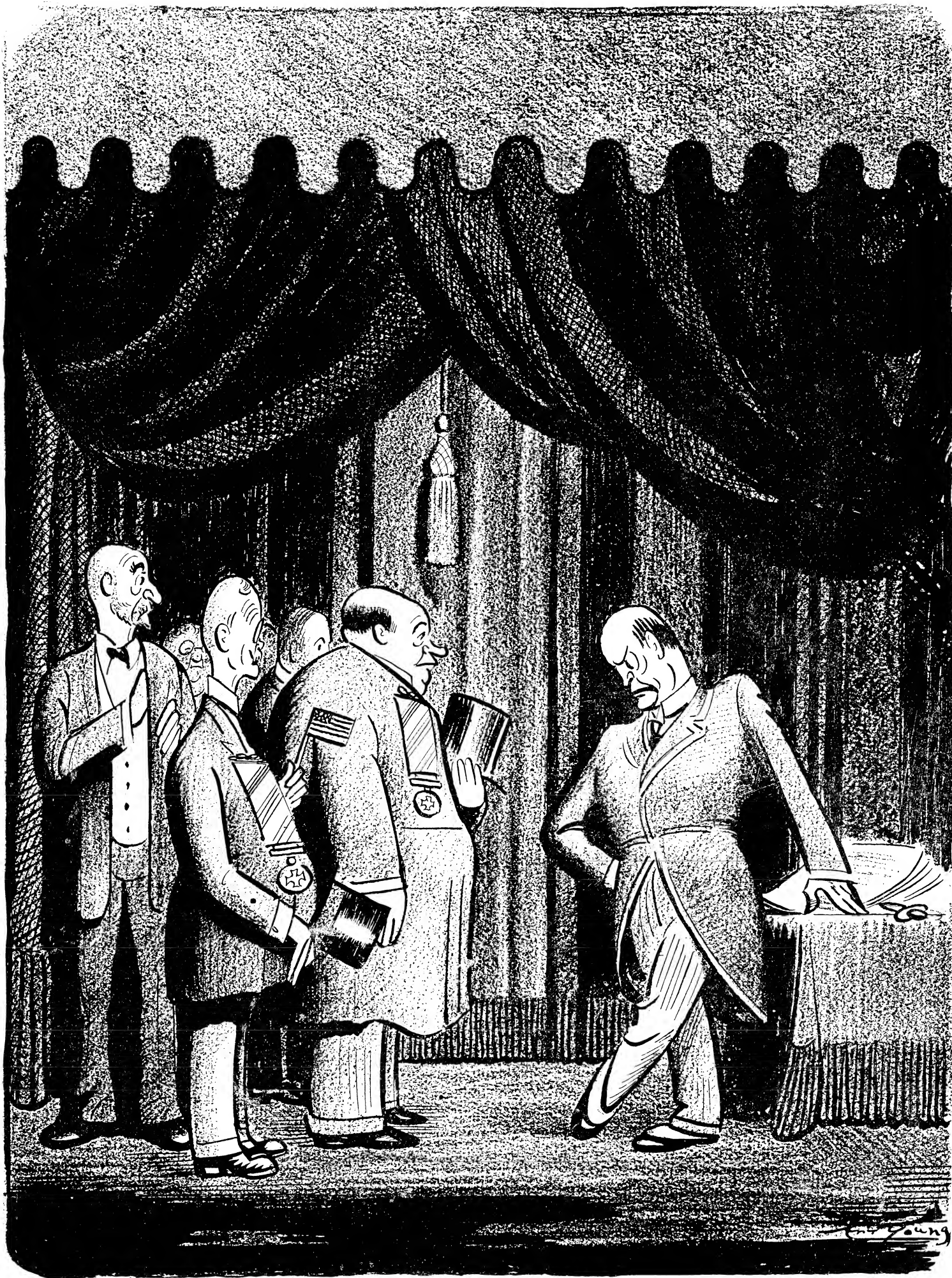
Ba-a-a-ah! Them reds is a bunch of lousy bums! Don't I know? I was one myself.



*Drawing by William Gropper*

*Ba-a-a-ah! Them reds is a bunch of lousy bums! Don't I know? I was one myself.*



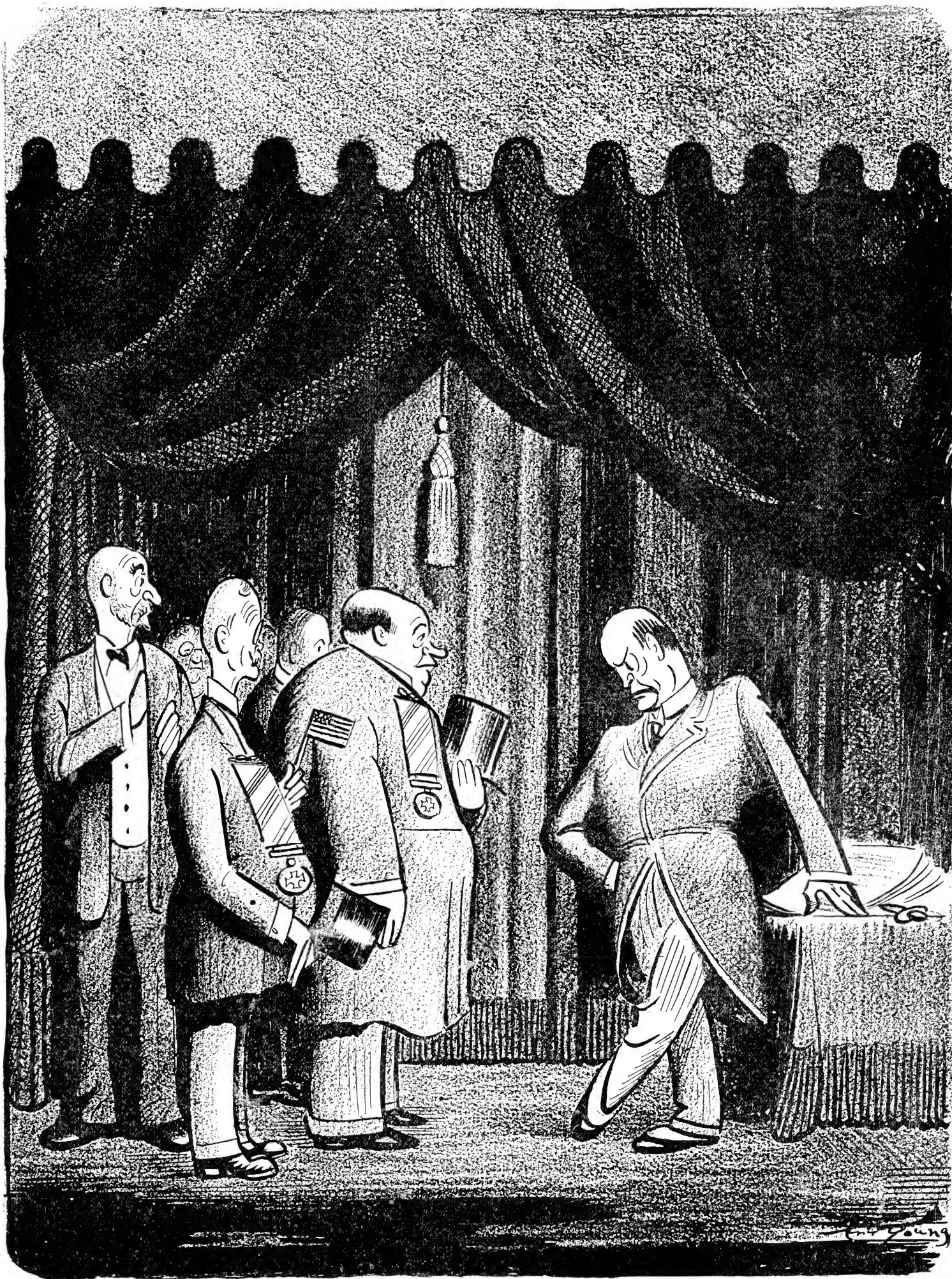


*Drawing by Art Young*

### FASCISTI FINANCE

*Mussolini (to group of American bankers): Gentlemen, now that I have honored you with medals, I shall expect you to give me another loan to pay for the interest on the last one.*





*Drawing by Art Young*

### FASCISTI FINANCE

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# THAT MONSTER — THE MACHINE

LEWIS MUMFORD vs. GENEVIEVE TAGGARD

## The Bourgeois Girls Like Their Ham Sliced Thin

JOHN RUSKIN said that gold wasn't a very valuable metal if a few pounds of it were strapped around you in a money belt and you were drowning at sea. I wish a few of our revolutionary brothers and sisters would remember this observation, when they stand in front of some beautiful and delicate piece of machinery, like a delicatessen meat slicer, and go through the motions of adoration and prayer. Whether machines are good or bad, interesting or offensive, helpful or inimical depends upon the purpose for which they are used. If the purpose further an abundant human life, if it make it easier to win food from the earth, or bear babies, or stand pain, or in general to feel keen and exhilarated and intelligent, the machine is good. If the purpose be indifferent to human life, if it make the worker himself a drudge, and the user of the product a mere goods-consuming, dividend-producing automaton, no ingenuity in its design will make the machine worth anybody's attention—except as a fetish. Stuart Chase sees this point clearly: following Ruskin, he has pointed out that the Machine Age produces large quantities of *illth* which must be balanced off against its nominal wealth, if we are to estimate the net gain. But the revolutionary girls and boys are tired and bored: They must worship something: so they worship the Machine: They must believe in something: so they believe in The Machine Age.

If they had read Thorstein Veblen or if they used their eyes acutely they would discover that half the marvels of the Machine Age, which they accept so gratefully, are products of the business system; and the only purpose they fulfill is that of usury or exorbitant gain. The skyscraper is perhaps the chief fetish of the revolutionary boys and girls; they talk as if our only hope for a lively modern architecture were in building more skyscrapers. This great feat of engineering is, however, merely a by-product of congestion, promoted for the purpose of increasing the financial returns upon land and buildings; it has no beauty which cannot be obtained by similar methods on a smaller scale, as Sullivan did in his banks, as Wright does in his houses, as Goodhue did in the Los Angeles Public Library, as Saarinen did in the Helsingfors Railway Station, as Stein and

Oudt and May and Taut do in workers' dwellings. It would be foolish to say that the skyscraper could not, on occasion, be esthetically interesting, because it has grown out of the price system; but it is far more stupid to tolerate the congestion and the land speculation because they produce an occasional sheltion. Our weaker brothers and sisters begin by praising the beauties of the Machine Age; if they are not careful, they will end by swallowing it whole — bonds, Babbitts, installment buying, speculation in necessities of life, and the bourgeois comforts generally—including slices of very thin ham cut by exquisite machinery in delicatessen stores.

It takes a little thought to separate what is humanly helpful in the Machine Age from what is futile, dreary, antagonistic to life; and when people are in the mood of worship — when they must adore something, if it be nothing more than a noiseless water-closet or glass rent-barracks—they prefer to accept things-as-they-are in one large complacent gulp. "What is, is good" is a much more comfortable assurance than the conviction that "some of what is, is good; some of it is indifferent; and some of it is damnably rotten." Still, with all allowances for boredom and fatigue and the need for an *Ersatz*-religion, one must insist that they do not entirely absolve one from the duties of thinking occasionally. Miss Genevieve Taggard, for instance, in a recent number of the *NEW MASSES*, spoke warmly in favor of subways and universal traffic signals under the impression that she was defending some of the essential glories of our modern life. Her defense had a certain lyric authenticity, but the fact of the matter is that a city built primarily for human needs, rather than for the needs of real estate speculators and financiers, would have no need whatever, under modern conditions, for subways—although it would of course have an aviation depot—and automatic traffic signals would probably be operated, if at all, only on main avenues during the peak hours of travel. Subways and universal traffic signals are symptoms of congestion—and congestion is a social maladjustment, promoted by the price system.

Coming to the bourgeois comforts that Miss Taggard thinks so highly of—bathtubs and hot water and transportation and the eight-hour day — they do not belong essentially to the age of the ma-

chine: they are equally the marks of a servile plutocracy, and were enjoyed in Imperial Rome on an even grander scale than they are today. I like baths and hot water, too; but I have gone without both of them for months at a time, without any discomfort whatever after the first two days. This does not show that I am unique or fanatical: the rest of the human race continues for the most part to live under conditions which make private baths and hot water used for external purposes a remote and impossible luxury; and for my part, I prefer to bear a little sweat and dirt rather than think these matters so important that I cut myself off from the ways and manners of the greater part of humanity. As for the eight-hour day—it is an abstract compromise which no decent community will eventually recognize. There are certain forms of work which cannot be humanly endured for half that time; there are other forms, like deep-sea fishing, in which it is an impossibility unless the boat is to be filled with crew instead of fish; and there are still other forms for which eight hours is far too little, when one is in the midst of an interesting spurt of activity. Eight hours a day is too long, I believe, for most mechanical toil; and when another hour is spent in the tortured posture of a crowded subway ride on a hot summer evening, that period is worse than inhuman.

But Miss Taggard must forgive me for introducing these human and social considerations into a discussion of esthetics. Mechanical delicatessen slicers are marvellous arrangements of ratchets, planes, and rotating cylinders. I admit that. I bow to their beauty. I differ from Miss Taggard in only one particular: I like my ham sliced thick, and I prefer to handle the knife myself!

Lewis Mumford.

## Do You Kill Your Own Hogs Too?

DEAR LEWIS:

I WAS trying to say in that very sketchy piece about the Ruskinian Boys simply this—(nothing very fundamental or economic)—too many young people who call themselves radicals and who write books and poems and plays have quite unconsciously a golf-club idea of the universe. They don't know how the world works — I don't mean intellectually—they have just missed experiencing the fact that one of the conditions of life has always been for some one an enor-

mous program of toil. Starting at that end, as the race started, the Machine Age has one meaning—it need neither be rejected or aestheticized—it can be accepted as a very interesting and enormously clever way of trying to do some of the work that has to be done. I know it is wasteful and bungling; and I know also that it is owned, which makes it often a monster in our eyes; but the machine in itself, as it was at Miss Heaps' show, is something for us to look at and realize, because the world's future and the world's good is all bound up with it.

And then in the second part of my article I was trying to puncture, not a reasoned economic treatise, but something very unconscious and emotional that underlies a lot of the literary work right now. The Ruskinian Boys read Veblen, and Marx, but they *feel* Ruskin, and so of course when they write, the sum total of what they say, is some more Ruskin. I wanted to air this tacit Social Philosophy a little. I have heard such nonsense for about seven years, and sometimes participated in it, because although I read Veblen, I often felt something else much prior to him. And I too, read my Ruskin, and believed in the essential vileness of machines and cities. But that was ten years ago.

In this piece I was trying to say, not that I think that the Machine Age is good or perfect, but that I know we like it. And it is false and literary to go on pretending that we don't. And then, assuming that as a whole we like it, if at certain times we don't like it, it is not because the Machine enslaves us, or, very often, because we are good economic beings and resent its identification with the capitalist class, but because we keep assuming that this is a world where we don't have to work. The yell is a leisure class yell and not a Social Philosophy. Let us be clear about it. It is the romanticism of people who have summer homes and who do a little decorative work on valueless farm land. Common people on the whole prefer to work with machines rather than without them. Well, I think they are healthy and sound. A farmer isn't romantic about his unstandardized labor. He knows what he wants when he buys a tractor.

The young men (and the young women) who write about how the machines devour and crush them and soil love and mangle the wing of the butterfly are the same young men who had to leave the farm



because they wouldn't get up at five and help Pa milk the cows. Pa and the Cows are still in literature—we know how the young men felt about *them*.

Well, what are the young men (I can't keep on adding "and the young women," but assume them, too,) good for anyway? Very little. Because they miss the point. Improving on the Machine Age demands a lot more keenness and energy than those boys and girls are prepared to give. Expressing

the Machine Age is beyond them. They feel very forcibly something that is undoubtedly true—namely that toil in itself isn't any fixed good and great thing. But they are not the people to feel it. The proletariat should feel it. First of all, we work because we must. Then a saving impulse comes, and we resolve to work only so far and so long. The proletariat is drubbed into feeling that it has got to work endlessly and patiently. It knows how to toil, but not how to

leave off. The literary boys and girls don't know how to work, even at their literary tasks. They go from mental golf-club to golf-club, because they belong to a class, emotionally, that has no structural or functional or whatever you like, connection with this going concern of a world. Some of our artists are catching up with the life we touch and make and enjoy. They have ceased to be like these people. It is no longer really necessary to make fun of the Ruskin-

ians, perhaps. Of course, as you point out, there is a lot of nonsense—a new convention of silly assent, growing up about this idea the Machine Age. The Ruskinians will change their costumes and move on to the next fashionable golf-club and the Machine Age will just be another topic for conversation, while some one else does the work, including the art.

Perhaps that's what you thought my article was doing!

G. Taggard.



Drawing by Adolph Dehn

*Oh Lord, our Shepherd, lead us, Thy sheep, into the divine pastures of Thy love.*





Adolf Dehn

Drawing by Adolph Dehn

*Oh Lord, our Shepherd, lead us, Thy sheep, into the divine pastures of Thy love.*

# I MEET AN INDIVIDUALIST

By HUGO GELLERT

I sit in a deck chair. The horizon rises above my head. Then again it disappears under my feet. Blue ink water. Cobalt blue sky. White patches of clouds.

I walk around the deck. I pass the railing of the aft deck. A blaze of reds greets my eyes as I look down over the top of the hull where the crew is sunning itself. A very familiar pattern of rich reds worked into a black slab of wood. A very familiar design.—Can it be mine? A great joy overtakes me—I rush down the ladder. The ship carpenter is making a table and he has cut the pattern into the table top. I feel as boastful as a two-year-old. I have to tell him that the design is mine. . . . He is very friendly. Tells me he copied it from the cover of an old *Masses*. Then he takes me into his cabin to show more of his work. A little red covered book of Engels' is on his bunk.

\* \* \*

London town. Clear June air. A high fence of wrought iron surrounds the garden on the square. Boys play football on the clearing behind the tall trees bordering the garden. Fresh voices shout the rules of the games.

On the shady side of the garden beside the fence a grown man makes pictures in colored chalk on the sidewalk. Square yards of pictures. Some of them not so bad. Drawings of people, animals, landscapes. And in large ornate letters he chalks the legend: "A veteran of the great war tries to earn an honest crust for his wife and three children."

Throw him a penny and hear his grateful "Thank you, sir!"

\* \* \*

A cafe on *Mont Parnasse*. Men and women of every nation sit around the little marble tops. I have a sore throat.—Almost every new comer gets it in the damp Paris weather.—The air is heavy with cigarette smoke. It doesn't seem to do much good for my throat. I wonder why I came here?

A Hungarian artist touches my shoulder.—"I hear you are going to Russia — what are you going for? It is no place for an artist. They are standardizing everything and crushing the individual."

"I haven't been to Russia yet, but I believe that they'll let you wear your hair as long as you like."

"Is that the best wit America has to offer?" Then the Hungarian darts through the door like a lunatic and disappears in the street. When he returns he is out of breath.

"An art dealer passed"—He explains apologetically.

"And you, the individualist, ran after him. If a fat art patron would show you the color of a thousand franc note you would drop on your knees."

"What if I would? Little things like that do not matter. It is only important to retain individuality in our work."

"You spend most of your energy

trying to sell your pictures and find very little time for your work. If some one offered you a large sum of money would you refuse to paint the kind of picture he would demand of you?"

"I would probably give him the picture he wanted."

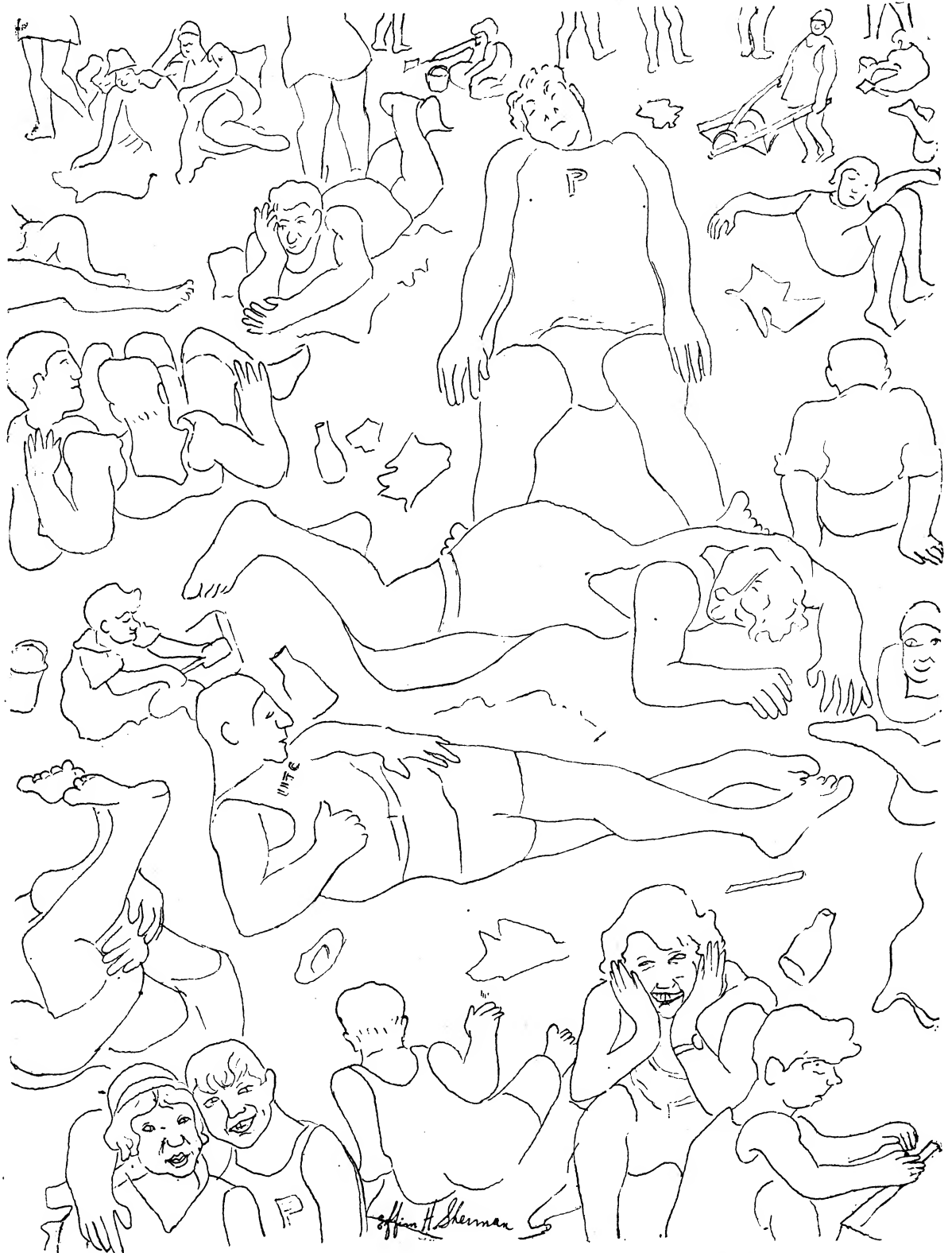
"Where then is the individuality you are so afraid to lose? The perfect individualist wouldn't even try to paint pictures. He would be so self sufficient he wouldn't need to. He would find complete satisfaction in conceiving his pictures, he wouldn't trouble himself about painting them.

"The need to communicate, to share ideas is the great motive power of the creative arts — without that we would have very little, if any, of pictures, or writing or music.

"With the passing of the phrase 'Art for Art's sake' the individualist artist dies too. The world is not divided into 'artists' and 'other people.'"

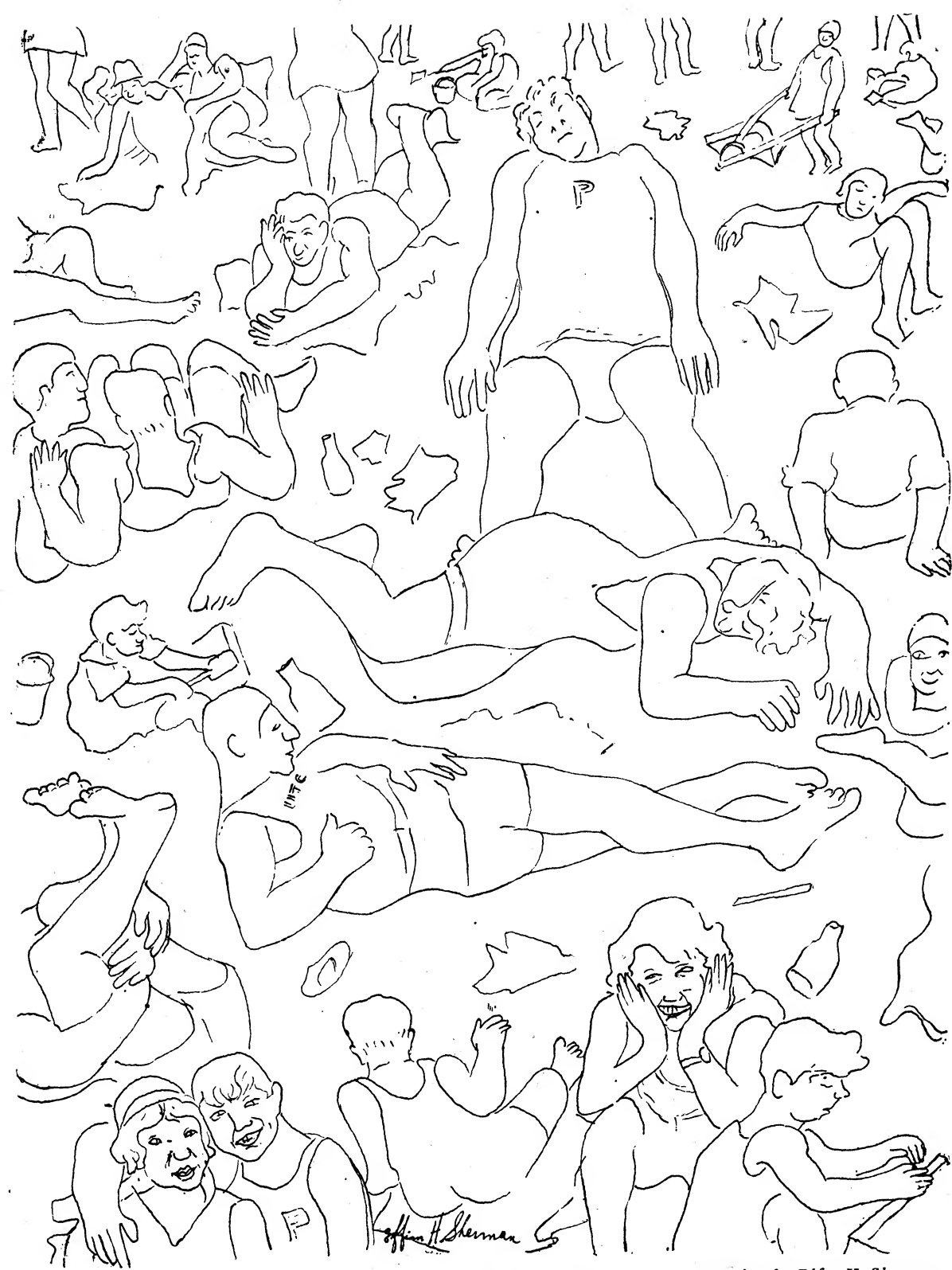
"Oh, shut up! Let a guy drink his coffee in peace."

"I guess I'll get some white Bordeaux. It's sweet. It might be good for my throat."



CONEY ISLAND

Drawing by Effim H. Sherman



*Drawing by Effim H. Sherman*

## CONEY ISLAND

# SATIRIST OR METAPHYSICIAN?

By JAMES RORTY

*The Women of Point Sur*, by Robinson Jeffers. Boni & Liveright. \$2.50.

IN two previous books Robinson Jeffers has exhibited one of the extraordinary talents now writing in English; he has also created one of the strangest worlds which any poet of modern times has evoked for the consternation of the timorous and the outrage of those whose simple craving for "the dog's meat, sanity" has excluded the keener speculative appetites.

*Tamar*, *Roan Stallion*, and *The Tower Beyond Tragedy* drown the trumpets of this new apocalypse in the tortured outcries of dramatic protagonists for whom the author may properly disavow first person responsibility. *The Women of Point Sur* has no such ambiguity. Here for the first time Jeffers' world-view becomes wholly explicit.

... Humanity is needless.  
I said: "Humanity is the start of the race,  
the gate to break away from, the coal to  
kindle,  
The blind mask crying to be slit with eye-  
holes."  
Well, now it is done, the mask slit, the rag  
burnt, the starting post left behind: but  
not in a fable.  
Culture's outlived, art's root-cut, discovery's  
The way to walk in. . . .

So Mr. Jeffers in the prelude of his drama.

Very well then, it becomes the business of the humanist critic, as distinguished from those whose preoccupations are wholly aesthetic and technical, to explore this new world which Jeffers has discovered and report the extent to which it is habitable by the human spirit. That, after all, must remain the basic criterion of judgment. The god whose power Mr. Jeffers aspires to touch may feel differently about it; but we, humming in the hive which he no longer hears, must judge his work exactly as we judge any other environmental phenomenon; by whether or not we can use it; whether or not it nourishes us, organizes and interprets our experience.

It seems to me that *The Women of Point Sur* does none of these things. For better or worse, it is metaphysical. And I for one think the flags should be hung at half mast every time a first rate artist turns metaphysician.

Metaphysics is not a new thing in the world. It is not and never has been a creative thing.

The human status is that of an adaptive organism. Consciousness is the instrument of that adaptation—not even, in all probability, an exclusive human possession.

Jeffers would widen the human periphery by isolating consciousness as a thing in itself. He would have consciousness judge human life and burn it, in order to achieve a mystical, monist, planetary "peace" beyond that burning.

I think Mr. Jeffers is merely lifting the old cry of "peace, peace." There is no peace, if the human status is what I have described it, that of an adaptive organism caught in an unbroken equilibrium of forces, from the electrons busy sowing new stars in the void to the (identical, probably) electrons vibrating in the "bone-lamps" of our brains.

Every man sees the phenomena of nature and art and their relations in terms of his own temperament. I have always been struck by the resemblance between the processes of vegetable and animal conception and birth, and the processes of artistic creation. I don't believe the human consciousness is a thing in itself which procreates by a kind of fission. If one could arrive at a satisfactory scientific definition of consciousness, I think that a chemical examination of blood corpuscles, hair, or even finger prints would find it there just as clearly as in the brain cells. An act of artistic creation has the same rhythm as a sexual act—prepara-

breathes after its fashion, and procreates itself upon the consciousness of others.

In order to generate one of these artistic creatures, an artist has to couple with the real universe. An abstract Consciousness, fornicating with an abstract Force yields precisely nothing.

This indicates a far harsher judgment on *The Women of Point Sur* than I am willing to pass.

I do think, however, that there is a short circuit somewhere in the creative processes of this man, who, by virtue of his extraordinary technical and imaginative endowments, should be and may yet prove to be one of the great poets of our time. An artist is likely to short-circuit to what he can do whenever he finds himself confronted with a task to which he feels himself at the moment inadequate. Jeffers can evoke landscape marvellously; his response to nature is that of any intense, sensitive and withdrawn artist. So far he has not demonstrated that he can create people; at the very moment when his characters ought to come alive they begin to gibber and disintegrate into melodrama and always at such moments the landscape is lit with a blaze of poetic eloquence.

Jeffers' feeling for nature has for me at times a quality which is both sentimental and masochistic.

... The old rock under the house, the hills with their hard roots and the ocean hearted  
With sacred quietness from here to Asia  
Make me ashamed to speak of the active little bodies, the coupling bodies, the misty brainfuls  
Of perplexed passion.

This seems to me false humility, even a familiar false humanity, since the poet too is inescapably a member of the species. Nor is it the proper gesture of an artist who approaches the woman-body of the universe with the determination to make it yield life more abundant.

It seems to me that Jeffers may be recognizing and trying to justify this when he says:

I am not your savior, I have sharper gifts than salvation.  
Not for salvation. For perfection. . . .  
Fire, not salt.

This, of course, we have heard before. In Nietzsche, in the Ibsen of the *Master Builder*—even in the latest phase of D. H. Lawrence. But for the prelude and the interlude one would be inclined to interpret this and other utterances of the mad preacher Barclay as satire, closely related for example to Ibsen's *Brandt*. But except for the passages where the poet speaks in the first person there is no *raison-*

*neur* in the drama, and too often Jeffers and Barclay speak with the same accent. The result leaves one with a disturbing sense of confusion and inadequacy.

Elsewhere, however, Jeffers appears to acknowledge the inadequacy of which I have been complaining. In the twelfth section of his book he interrupts his narrative with an interlude, itself magnificent poetry, in which he says:

I made glass puppets to speak of him, they splintered in my hand and have cut me, they are heavy with my blood. . . . I sometime  
Shall fashion images great enough to face him  
A moment and speak while they die. These here have gone mad: but stammer the tragedy you crackled vessels."

Here is the sane man, the honest artist confessing that his drama won't come off—as it doesn't. But I don't think that Jeffers has got at the root of his difficulty. These puppets haven't gone mad; they haven't been born. Only living creatures can speak of Him, and the people in *The Women of Point Sur* don't live; as in *Tamar* they are again dry puppets kept dancing by the power of an extraordinarily intense style. The denouement of their action is not drama, which can only be achieved by the conflict of created characters acting inevitably according to their natures. It is melodrama; their assorted lusts, perversions and destructions are foisted on them from the outside.

I have said nothing so far about Jeffers' interest in the abnormalities of sex—an interest which seems entirely cold and chiefly symbolic. More important is Jeffers' physical and mental isolation from the life of his time, which I cannot help regarding as unfortunate and dangerous.

I have so little appetite for metaphysics that I weary of responding to the intellectual challenges which Jeffers has scattered through his book. I commend the task to others better qualified, believing that if "the gelded air of the country" can supply enough energetic correctives to an artistic force, the power of which has been recognized, but neither understood nor effectively dealt with, it will be good for the country and good for Jeffers.

*The Women of Point Sur* is written, if anything, more magnificently than his other books. Jeffers is sane, and a poet whom it is possible to call great. He would be saner, and a greater poet if the country could supply what Whitman demanded—great audiences.

James Rorty.



Woodcut by Lowell Hauser  
**CANTINA**

tion, culmination, and release. Moreover, a piece of genuine creative art is another creature added to the universe. It moves with the physical rhythm of its father's walk and gesture. It too lives and





*Woodcut by Lowell Hauser*

**CANTINA**

# ONE MORE LAW TO VIOLATE

By FLOYD DELL

*Birth Control Laws: Shall We Keep Them, Change Them, or Abolish Them? By Mary Ware Dennett. Frederick H. Hitchcock. \$2.50.*

HISTORIANS of the future will note of the present period that it was the one in which the spread of knowledge concerning methods of preventing conception gradually displaced the ancient and universal practice of abortion, as a means of limiting the size of families. In the meantime it is interesting to note the shifts and dodges by which abortion still holds its own in the land of the brave and the home of the free.

The abortionists, whose business is almost as lucrative as the boot-leggers', do not have to send a paid lobby to Congress to fight against the proposals to repeal the anti-birth-control laws. The Catholic church, doubtless with the holiest intentions in the world, fights for them, by exerting its pressure against any change in the laws. And Protestant Puritanism does the rest. The legislators, who themselves usually practice birth-control, are afraid it would injure their political careers to vote for birth-control. So they vote for abortions. They do not call it that, but that is what it amounts to—a vote against birth-control is a vote for abortions. But they should worry. They violate the law, why can't other people, and let the law stay the way it is?

Americans are natural-born Anarchists. They like to have the moral luxury of impossible and absurd laws, leaving it to people's instincts to find ways of getting around them. A great many of us succeed. The existing laws do not greatly hamper the intelligent and the fortunate in the management of their lives. They have never cramped my style in any way that I could notice. I suppose I have casually broken enough laws to entitle me to board and keep in prison for the next hundred and fifty years. So, probably, have you, if you stop to think about it. But not everybody is as intelligent or as fortunate as we are. There are poor miserable God-damn fools who actually obey those crazy laws. That is just the trouble.

So far as the prevention of conception is concerned, the difficulty is a new way of dealing with sex; it calls for forethought instead of merely afterthought; indeed, it requires some considerable degree of self-control and consideration—and it works best in an atmosphere of candor, free from shame. In short,

it requires a rather high quality of civilization. That is why it has not already become universal. It has ignorance, stupidity, folly, muddle-headedness and fear to contend against.

Nevertheless this modern machine world in which womenfolk increasingly live is one which in-

creasingly exacts of them the control of their biological potentialities. The lesson is being learned by the younger generation, in spite of the laws, in our American fashion. Vast sums are spent every year on advertising the more obvious of these secrets to women. Getting past the censor is not an ex-

clusively Russian trick. A few years ago there used to be a bottle of — of — tablets in the cabinet of every self-respecting American bathroom; but too many times they were mistaken for headache tablets, with fatal results, and a campaign of education was undertaken, with the co-operation of the corner drug-stores, and now it is something else. Doubtless American efficiency will presently produce something which will not only serve these important though still legally unmentionable purposes but will also cure headaches when taken by mistake! When that discovery is made, you will read about it in full-page advertisements. You will know what the advertisements mean. Everybody will know what they mean. But the law will be kept intact. That is our American way of doing things. And only the poor unfortunates who can't afford to buy the high-class magazines and read between the lines will continue to suffer the penalties of their ignorance.

Mrs. Dennett's book is an instructive account of a gallant effort by the Voluntary Parenthood League to secure a repeal of the silly Comstock law, so far as it relates to information concerning the prevention of conception. Further than that, it deals with a question at issue between two factions in the Birth-Control Movement. Mrs. Dennett's group wishes to repeal the law; Mrs. Sanger's group wishes to amend it so as to legalize the giving of such information by physicians and medical magazines and in reprints therefrom. The former proposal is the more attractive on grounds of principle; the latter is urged by its adherents as more feasible—an argument which is controverted vigorously in Mrs. Dennett's book. But I am not going into the details of the controversy. I am going to preserve a United Front in this review. I agree (more or less) with both factions. And I don't care very much which side knocks the stuffing out of the Comstock law. But those who like to know the inside of these little family rows will find the book all the more interesting.

It is also valuable as giving the story of how Comstock put the law over on America when nobody was looking, thus giving intelligent and fortunate Americans one more law to violate.

And, by the way, have you done your Daily Violation yet today?

Lola Ridge.

Floyd Dell.

## SALT WATER

*Poems, by S. H. Samuels. Neidorf Book Store. Brooklyn, N. Y.*

WE kept our chastity, my songs." This line, from the first poem in this book by S. H. Samuels, strikes its keynote. The will whose movements they record has held to its purity of intent. It is a flexible untrammelled will, like a sea wind a little bleak, and as uncoercible, knowing no limitations save those implicit in itself. Samuels' rhythms have the undulant monotony of the sea, a sea that moves gently and that does not rise in high white peaks. The protracted lines run to paragraph length. They have a sad, half-defiant verbosity.

Samuels, who during most of his young life has been a ship's engineer, writes as one who has lived and suffered with the world's workers. Yet his love for his kind is of the negative order, receptive and ingrowing, rather than giving and out-flowing. Their struggles and pains have only fortuitous place in this spiritual diary of his life. His poems are the expressions of a lonely, self-centered spirit that wanders like a wind and is as tolerant of all it touches, but that does not dissipate nor bestow itself.



Woodcut by Lowell Hauser  
**Eskimo Madonna**

He observes with a cool but impartial sympathy the dust of roads ageing the feet of evangelists, town-boosters, miners, panhandlers. He abjures the bourgeois family, the thought of which abrades him like

a chain. Yet he is obsessed by and returns to it again and again. It is responsible for one of his best poems from which I quote:

"Here lies our beloved son. . . ."

No, I won't be there at the burial plot when I turn to dust, powdered, pulverized, wind-scattered dust.

No, I won't be there under the tremulous cascades of fallen tears, of parent, brother, sister, friend or sympathizer.

Hereafter, I shall go tramping with the carefree, roughneck, thousand-year-old winds.

I shall go mountaineering with the ruthless, gypsy-winds.

I shall wander in this new life as I did in the old, when I shape into dust.

Authentic, these poems are. Continuous, linked moments of a life, lived through, here recorded, having the salt flavor of life, but lacking mostly its color and momentum—like water that has been taken from the sea. Human experiences flow into one another. When they are isolated for the artist's purpose, they undergo, inevitably, dimensional loss. Each bleeds away some portion of its coloring, its life sap. This loss has to be made good by the artist in whose heightened consciousness each experience is heated as in a crucible, and out of whose plastic substance it must be recast.

For the most part Samuels' material has passed through him without becoming enriched in the process. But the following illumined poem, which sheds a pellucid light like that of a milky jewel, suggests more possibilities in the man than have been exploited between the covers of this book:

VIII

Let my life be transparent and crystal-clear as the cool white light spreading on the horizon to rule the day.

Let the adventures of my life be endless as the many million hues in the white light of the day.

Let the adventures of my life be unknown as the many million hues, imperceptible in the white light as they expire, transpire from minute to minute, from hour to hour, and year to year.

Let my life shepherd-like guide my adventures as the spectrum white light herds in the scattered flock of many million hues, revealing, en masse, the daylight spreading on the day.

Let the adventures of my life be without event, climax, plot or secret as the white light with its latent million hues, imperceptible, multiplying, transforming, prospering into many color combinations and arrangements.

Let there be no leaders or stragglers in the procession of my adventures, but rhythm and harmony in my life and its adventures as the cadence in the rainbow colors of the white light around me.



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## AN IRONIST'S REWARD

*Tristram*, by Edwin Arlington Robinson. The Macmillan Co. and The Literary Guild. \$1.75.

PERHAPS Edwin Arlington Robinson was tired of being called a cerebral poet. Perhaps that is why the poet of frustration and futility and disillusion, who used to find greatness in a village failure and failure in a court success, has written a romantic tragedy of ancient royalty.

Old admirers of Mr. Robinson would like his new public to turn back to the more characteristic work. For the author of *Tristram* has forgotten something that he knew when he wrote *Merlin* and *The Man Who Died Twice* and some of the shorter poems; and he has learned something—a new facility, a lavishness of mannerism. When he writes “Lost in a gulf of time where time was lost,” and “A man stronger than men stronger than he,” and that Isolt “Was now, for knowledge born of all endurance, Only beyond endurance beautiful,” he does it with a simple turn of the wrist; but one grows tired of finding the same trick on almost every page.

The two long love-scenes are pushed to the extreme of eloquence. The “cerebral poet” rhapsodizes until he has to fall back on irony to save his climax. “You are the stars when they all sing together.

. . . You are Isolt—or I suppose you are.”

In itself the story does not appeal easily to modern readers. Feudalism has been a long time dead; anyway we associate it with more important activities than amorous rivalry and intrigue. Thwarted love seems to us an improbable theme. Today we do not love so desperately—we are reasonable. If we cannot reason away the obstacles, as we usually can, we try to reason away the love. We find it hard to weep for ardent lovers separated by a cruel fate. Our tears, if we have any, are needed rather for those who try to stifle a love that is not returned; for weak lovers whose feeble flame goes out before difficulties or before their own fear of a ruling passion. The only figures Mr. Robinson makes us thoroughly pity are Mark of Cornwall who cannot make his queen love him, and the wasted, intense white Isolt of Brittany. And he softens even their bitterness by a Wagnerian richness of pictures and music.

It would be hard to pick a poet to match this *Tristram*. That means little. But it does not itself match its author's best work. To win with it his greatest success and the praise which belonged by better right to other poems of his—that is an ironical crown to an ironist's career. M. T.

## WHO'S INFERIOR NOW?

*The Golden Complex*, by Lee Wilson Dodd. John Day Company. \$1.75.

ON the whole, since the news was first broadcast that the meek shall inherit the earth, it has remained a pious hope to be embellished and framed along with “Jesus will save!” to decorate the cottages of slaves. But the lapse of centuries has seen the meek growing skeptical. At various times and in various countries hunger has overridden their love of comforting mottos, and like the Jacques, Chartists, and Bolsheviks, they have sometimes taken matters into their own hands to forget the conditions of their heritage. The high priests of slave morality have trembled. For the meek to be grabbing the earth by violence was not according to scripture—as they chose to interpret it. So recently in the interests of cosmic economy, they called in the experts and Freud, Jung & Adler, Inc., and together they all worked out a feasible agenda. Now, for the first time in history, without all this wasteful and unhealthy violence, the entire brotherhood of the meek are to get what's coming to them while not

in the least disturbing the status quo. Of course all this works by the simple inferiority-complex-and-compensation formula.

This proposition looks on a rich and fertile country which may be plowed to advantage on either side of the fence. Yet there is nothing in the permanent truths of psychoanalysis to justify Lee Wilson Dodd in his *Golden Complex*, a thinly-veiled satire on the inferiority complex, which for some reason or other has been taken by some of the critics as a serious defense. It is rather dull satire at that, for while Mr. Dodd, tries hard to keep his tongue in his cheek, it pops out rather vulgarly at times in spite of himself; and it reveals a fundamental ignorance of his subject. Not because he hasn't gone to his sources—evidently he spent quite a few days in the public library, cavorting through pages that were way beyond his speed;—but because he is too much of a Puritan at heart honestly to face the conclusions of psychoanalysis. With a triumphant whoop he recognizes in the unconscious mind another, more subtle disguise of the devil; and the cloven hoof of his own prejudices peeps out, when-

ever the psychoanalysts lay impious hands on “God.” “For,” he asks, “what if turning from the world to God were precisely what it purports to be, and not an elaborate disguise for something else? What if spiritual intuitions were really spiritual intuitions?” This, after he has accused the analysts of “begging the whole question” by using

words without adequately defining them. As for his assumption that psychoanalysis is dead, a coroner's inquest would reveal that, although it is no longer the best etiquette to mention it in the drawing-room, among our more advanced novelists and psychologists it is still a pretty lively corpse.

Gertrude Diamant.

## THERE HE STOPS

*Business Cycles and Business Measurements*, by Carl Snyder. Macmillan Co. \$6.00

CARL SNYDER is a part of the Federal Reserve System. He knows business facts; mathematics; statistical theory; the science of chart making. He is thoroughly acquainted with the recent literature on business cycles. He is well versed in the economic history of the United States. Judging from the appearance of his work, he has had limitless assistance in preparing tables and diagrams and in collecting material. Despite these manifold advantages he has produced one of the most amazingly ignorant and unimaginative books that it has ever been my hard luck to read.

The author describes the business cycle intimately. His Chapter V, dealing with *A New Measure of the Volume of Trade*, aims to provide “a single, accurate statistical index which will represent the general state of business of the country as a whole, and by which we can measure the different phases of the business cycle.” No reader of this chapter can fail to realize that the business cycle is not only organically connected with the present economic system, in all of its more important aspects, but that, despite the efforts of the business world, the business cycle has persisted throughout the whole of the capitalist period.

Such facts have been known for a long time. Snyder groups them together and applies the yard stick to them.

There he stops.

He has no sense of the meaning of the business cycle. His facts tell him no story. He is like an astronomer with his eyes so full of star dust that he no longer sees any stars.

Early in his work Snyder observes that since we can measure every phase of the business cycle so closely, “we shall be able better to calculate, in each industry, the probable demand, and automatically to regulate production to this demand. When we do, to all intents, the business cycle will have disappeared.” Apparently, then, the conquest of the business cycle is tied up with a knowledge of the extent of the probable market. In the last paragraph of his text, how-

ever, he turns wearily away: “It is through measures of the type described in the preceding chapters, that much can be done towards the intelligent understanding that should eventually lead to control of the business cycle.”

With the exception of a few lame paragraphs hinting at theory, the author apparently has not the faintest conception of the reasons why business cycles occur, and is therefore quite unprepared to suggest any measures that will dispose of them. He has not thought fundamentally about the business cycle. He does not see the business cycle as a logical and inevitable phase of the present system of business organization for profit. The author has photographed some of the external aspects of business cycles. As far as causation is concerned, he remains in the dark. And for the future? He suggests more photographs!

For the future, understanding, organization, action!

We have photographs aplenty now. Of course we should take more as the phenomena of new business cycles sweep past us. But in between times, there is more than ample room for economic statesmanship, and an understanding grasp of the forces that are sweeping the capitalist system toward disaster.

Snyder realizes the need. He points out that the number of business failures, compared with the number engaged in business, is just about what it was fifty years ago. He does not mention unemployment at all. But he evidently realized that these years of periodic disaster bring hardship to multitudes. Like war and disease, business cycles cripple and destroy.

To meet any of these factors that produce human misery, it is necessary to know the why and the how. Then it is necessary to adopt a line of action calculated to overcome the cause of human hardship and suffering. Perhaps it is too much to expect a New York banker to become a crusader against an economic order that makes his bank profitable. But certainly it is not too much to ask a writer on business cycles to show at least a glimmering of knowledge as to the causes behind the phenomena he is describing. Scott Nearing.

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## LIMITING DEVICES

*Fine Clothes to the Jew, By Langston Hughes. Alfred A. Knopf. \$2.00.*

THE poems in this volume have a certain amount of power, and a great deal of ease. Hughes is colorful, unsentimental, sharp, and at time strange. He uses Negro dialect and jazz rhythm, in this particular volume, with as much success as anyone has achieved using those limiting devices. But with the American language, to which Hughes will have to turn, he is not yet familiar. An indication of what he may do when he learns a way to use "American" may be seen in the following:

### SPORTS

Life  
For him  
Must be  
The shivering of  
A great drum  
Beaten with swift sticks  
Then at the closing hour  
The lights go out  
And there is no music at all  
And death becomes  
An empty cabaret  
And eternity an unblown saxophone  
And yesterday

A glass of gin  
Drunk long  
Ago.

In the main, however, Hughes sticks to dialect poetry; he handles this well, is nearly always successful with it, is precise, imaginative, simple.

De railroad bridge's  
A sad song in de air.  
De railroad bridge's  
A sad song in de air.  
Ever time de train pass  
I wants to go somewhere.

The trouble with these successes is that they are all small; the poems are little better than poignant playthings. Dialect of any kind, it seems, automatically reduces a poem from the adult to a miniature plane, to a state of unreality. Paradoxically, though the language may be straight from life, a work in dialect is always slightly stagey, a tour de force.

But Hughes has done more with his conventional "Negro stuff"—has used its style to better advantage—than, in my opinion, any other dialect writer.

Kenneth Fearing.

## EARLY AMERICAN ART

*Maya and Mexican Art, by Thomas Athol Joyce. The Studio Ltd., London. 10/6.*

IN a field that has been such a happy hunting ground for fad-dists and loose theorizers, it is of great import to have a sound, sober and sane account such as Mr. Joyce's manual of Mayan and Mexican art. With excellent illustrations and bibliography, and with a lucid clarity that almost conceals the depth and range of his scholarship, he gives a succinct, authoritative survey of the important phases of the pre-Columbian civilizations of Central America—Early and late Mayan, Toltec, Tarascan and Aztec. Both the succession and the overlappings of these cultures stand out at last in some real perspective under the deft, simple handling and an appraisal and interpretation of their characteristic individualities is made possible. This is due mainly to two things which make this modest little volume a model for subsequent popular analyses of primitive culture and art. First a scale of culture, stages is definitely indicated and the cultures clearly characterized and assigned for comparison to their appropriate type.

Then each aspect of their art,—architecture, sculpture, pottery, painting, metal work and decoration, is treated not merely in its cultural and aesthetic elements, but in practical terms of its materials and technology. One gets

accordingly an organic picture of the art together with its cultural background, and is rescued from the romantic confusion in which many treatises on exotic civilizations leave us.

Primitive art, on the whole, needs particularly sound interpretation today. We are just beginning to understand its worth and significance. As more and more the artistic virtuosity of primitive peoples is forced upon our attention, we are driven gradually to that inevitable position of cultural relativism to which our science should long ago have brought us, and according to which ultimately our whole conception of culture must be revised and re-written. The high artistic level of the prehistoric Americans is especially noteworthy, since, as Mr. Joyce says, their civilization was "for all practical purposes a stone-age civilization, yet from certain aspects, their relief sculpture in stone was superior to that of Egypt or Mesopotamia, while their pottery, in technique, form and ornament, surpassed the ceramic products of any other people ignorant of the potter's wheel, except that of the ancient Peruvians." One wonders, however, how long it will yet be, even in the face of the scientific evidence, before the popular mind gives up its superstition that ours was the first civilization of the Western hemisphere.

Alain Locke.

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## THE ESSAY, IT SEEMS

*Nineteen Modern Essays. With an introduction by W. A. J. Archbold. Longmans, Green. \$1.75.*

WHEN you write something short, and it isn't a short story, it seems it has to be an essay. In this book, there are pieces of writing, one called *A Conversation* and the other *The Probable Future of Mankind*; and they're both essays. You can write something on *The History of a Twig in Autumn* or something on *The Barbarism of the Assyrian Empire* or something on *Some Sad, Big Things About the Human Soul*, and they'll all be essays. It may be seen, then, that essay is a big word and takes in a lot.

This collection, a modest and quiet thing, intended to be used in schools as much as anywhere else, takes in the whole world. Here is Mr. Beerbohm being charming and kittenish and kittenishly biting about *Laughter*; here is our very Mr. Wells being portentous and cheering all at once about *The Probable Future of Mankind*: Mr. Wells is still our most successful worrier about mankind. Robert Louis Stevenson has here that essay on *Books Which Have Influenced Me* which has caused more bad writing than perhaps would otherwise be, for by reading this suave, rather taking if not so deep or poignant writing, many young men were suddenly taken with the disposition to be literary when they, truly, ought not to have been. Mr. Chesterton writes on *Simplicity* and *Tolstoy*. Of course, Chesterton could be more simple; Mr. Chesterton is brilliant, but he makes too much of a fuss when he writes; one reason I don't like paradoxes is, that I don't like needless fussmaking.

And these are but four out of nineteen essays. When you take the other fifteen, and are rather free with their scope, or kind as to their range, you'll find that this, our universe, with all the angles it may be seen from and all the aspects it may be seen under, is pretty well covered in *Nineteen Modern Essays*. Textbooks can deal with the whole universe.

The essay has surely evolved, and very likely obeys certain eternal laws, and very likely, too, is now in its infancy or is undergoing a transition stage or at least something. Essays, even quiet, Charles Lamblike things or hearthy, wood-fire sweetly superficial *Atlantic Monthly* things, move as the world does. I have noticed in reading some of those determinedly charming essays which still now and then are in the *Atlantic*, that they too can't get away from Problems and Meaningfulness and Reality

and Seriousness; essays are still written on *Laburnum Trees* and *My Fellow-Passenger in the Stage-Coach* and *Some Whims of Mine*, but no longer do laburnum trees and fellow-passengers and whims have such a nice, sweet world of it. They have competition. The kittenish essays are growing tigerish some. It's all evolution and history.

Just what the essay is, or at least what it can do has to be found out. We most of us can't read big books any more, or for that matter, small books; and yet we have to know things, feel things. There should be more prevalent than it now is the short piece of writing that is compact, says something, says it gracefully and yet rather exactly and fully. We want knowledge and grace together. Montaigne, who is one of the men

### CRAVEN

In his soul  
there hides a rabbit.  
To save his soul  
to save it whole  
he has built a fence  
of commonsense,  
—commonsense  
combined with habit—  
but inside the fence  
is but a rabbit.

Peggy Bacon

who began this essay business, was charming and deep and philosophic, but he didn't know so well just what he was going to say. Desultoriness is nice, but a finished job is good, too, and I think a finished job can be at the same time charming and suave and graceful and all that. Solidity is not against grace, nor is completeness. The way Montaigne wrote often, it seems, was to write a while on certain "favorite topics," and then getting tired, to slap on a title. So in a way did Hazlitt, and so do all of Hazlitt's industrious imitators now with us in the magazines. And those who imitate Lamb are horrible in their wilfully rambling series of "whims" and "notions" and "gay conceptions" and Lord knows what else. When I read these 1927 Lambs I long for a good bank report, or a thorough newspaper story or maybe a good canoe ride.

A lot can be done with the essay. Have it charming and graceful still, but have it, too, of this hot, living world of ours. Let us have our Marxes and our Lambs, our Robert Owens and our Leigh Hunts, our Lester Wards and our Stevensons together.

Eli Siegel.

# DISTINGUISHED REGRESSION

*Autobiographies*, by W. B. Yeats. The Macmillan Co. \$3.50.

THE six volumes of W. B. Yeats' *Collected Works*, of which *Autobiographies* is the latest, represent the most important contribution to British literature in two generations. Mr. Yeats would be certain of a distinguished place in the poetry of the English language on the evidence of the *Later Poems* alone: it is no longer to be doubted that Mr. Yeats, with Hardy as his only rival, is the great poet of the epoch. The *Essays* would isolate him as a critic of the first rank, and along with the *Autobiographies*, would entitle him to stand with the first prose-stylists of his country. The *Plays* are not likely to live as drama, but they contain poetry of a high order, and they complete the documentation of the profoundest vision of life in our time. In almost every kind of writing Mr. Yeats has excelled. But it would be difficult to say just what, in an age of experimentation, he has brought into letters. He is the veritable type of conscious artist, but he has no craft. As Mr. Wyndham Lewis has pointed out, Joyce is the typical craftsman, and the novelty of his methods has been the focus of our criticism. As a technician Mr. Yeats is the master who leaves us with no other choice than to concentrate almost solely upon what he has to say.

The chief quality of Mr. Yeats' mind is its integrity, and by that I mean its character as an *integer* unbroken by the abstract categories of doctrinaire thinking. The critic will look in vain in his work for a conscious use of the various instruments of thought; he is never the critic, as distinguished from the poet, never the dramatist as distinguished from the politician; above all, he has never adopted, as the professional philosopher or economist must do, a special technology; yet he is, in a high sense, poet, politician, dramatist, philosopher, and economist. All of his thinking is conducted in terms of a personal vision, and his judgment is always controlled by a deep sense of the totality of his world. The freshness, the hardness, the simplicity and lucidity of his style are properties of this attitude. No other major writer of the age possesses it. Mr. Yeats, in shielding himself from the leading assumptions of the time, has preserved the distinction of the great tradition in English poetry, and it is no aloof recognition on his part of his own merit, but an acute sense of his place in European culture, which permits him to say—

And I may dine at Journey's End  
With Landor and with Donne.

There could be no more accurate chart of the path of his regression

to the seventeenth century, than this. The economic and social structure of Ireland in the latter half of the last century could not, as the fashionable critics of our time would believe, have produced Mr. Yeats' talent, but it made some of its qualities and attitudes possible. Ireland was at least a century behind the Industrial Revolution. The Yeats and Pollexfen families were fair examples of the fine provincial culture which, in England as a whole down to the middle of the eighteenth century, determined the quality of English letters. It was an agrarian culture that God had made before men made the town. It was non-acquisitive, conservative, bound to custom; its characteristic attitudes were a supernatural view of nature and a wise ignorance; being non-acquisitive, not bent upon mastering the world, it was detached and poetic, not scientific and practical. This antithesis, with Mr. Yeats' allegiance to the older horn of it, becomes the stage upon which he dramatizes his thought. It is the point of departure of his pessimism. Abstraction is defeating the "image," abstraction being science with its machinery, its intellectual fashions, its megalopolitan life, and the "image" the simple contact with the world that men in the great tradition maintained. The theme of the *Autobiographies* is the change that has come over modern culture in the last half century, due to the advance of the megalopolitan, scientific, industrial order. Mr. Yeats' history of this revolution in thought is the most searching yet written; for, while understanding the significance of the scientific advance as few men do, his singular exemption from its influence has permitted him to stand aside and see it with the advantage of distance. His conclusion is unequivocal: "The best lack all conviction, while the worst are full of passionate intensity."

The conclusion is simple, but it is not so simply grounded as it seems, torn out of its context. Mr. Yeats' history of the "tragic generation" of the eighteen-nineties is not only the most interesting in detail; it is the most important for its criticism; he has written the final judgment of an epoch. How could the men of the Nineties keep away from tragic lives, he might ask, when they had lost the Vision of Evil? Nineteenth century materialism projected the idea of evil as a simple wastage of the machine, and men are the levers and cogs that sometimes miss. Life loses its intensity; men live by abstractions and catchwords. Mr. Yeats seems to say (I record it for what it is worth), that we shall not have a great literature again.

Allen Tate.

# Like This - Everyday!

"Our Only Hope of Life in Comrades Outside", Say Sacco and Vanzetti

BOSTON, Mass., Aug. 8.—Nicola Sacco and Bartolomeo Vanzetti today sent the following message to their comrades throughout the world: "We are unafraid to die Wednesday at midnight for our revolutionary beliefs. But we place our only hope of life in our comrades outside." The message was sent by word of mouth, the prison warden stopping all written communications. Let labor respond with an irresistible nation-wide strike TODAY!

**THE DAILY WORKER** FINAL CITY EDITION

Vol. IV, No. 177, NEW YORK, TUESDAY, AUGUST 8, 1927

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AN EVENING AFFAIR By FRED ELLIS

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**MANY ORGANIZATIONS FOR STRIKE**

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